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## Pilate's Pregnant Question Considered.

### A SERMON

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*What is Truth?*—John xviii: 38.

THE circumstances under which the world's Redeemer was arraigned were enough to have intimidated and confounded an impostor. He was treacherously and remorselessly seized by bloodthirsty myrmidons amid the darkness of night and in the quiet retirement of His favorite garden, beyond the brook Kedron. But His time had come, and He was ready. The hour for the awful consummation of the great evangelical *Truth* for which He left heaven was at hand, and He might not withdraw from the fearful ordeal without sacrificing the Divine veracity and sealing the world's fate.

Jesus Christ was the mighty embodiment of *eternal Truth*, and the recognized exponent of the power and purity of the Godhead upon earth; and this occasion must not pass without a conspicuous vindication of His claims.

The sacrilegious multitude rush impetuously on, headed by hell's willing representative—the prince of traitors—with a hypocritical smile upon his perjured lips, the price of his Saviour's blood yet clinking in his purse, and the excoriating curse of the damning deed even now blistering his conscience.

But still they push on—intruding upon the hallowed spot of His devotional solitude, until arrested by the sudden presence of Divinity. Thunderstruck and confounded, they halt. *Jesus speaks.* “Whom seek ye?” “Jesus of Nazareth,” the trembling miscreants stammeringly reply.

Nearly eighteen and a half centuries have passed away since that eventful night. And yet I think I see the light of the Godhead beam in His eye, and hear His immortal, unprevaricating answer, “I AM HE,” as it passed with the tremors of an earthquake through their guilty ranks, until, staggering and unstrung, they fall backward to the earth like supple and defenceless reeds before the hurricane's breath. The astonished wretches are at length allowed to recover, and Christ meekly consents to meet the doom which he had chosen 4,000 years before. He stands before Caiaphas, and fearlessly and openly proclaims the *Truth*. Then, before Pilate's bar, in the Judg-

ment Hall, while the horrors of crucifixion overhang Him, and His fiendish persecutors are thirsting for His blood, He declares, "To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the *Truth*." "What is truth?" was then the skeptical inquiry of the half-convinced Roman Governor, as he turned upon his heel and left the room, to report to the Jews the faultless character of their victim. He waited not for an answer. Perhaps his quaking conscience cowered in the presence of personified *Truth*, and he dreaded the reply which would condemn his servile connivance at flagrant, unparalleled murder. Nor was the answer vouchsafed to him, nor to his godless accomplices in guilt. The world's history was to furnish the reply—not in one distinct, categorical response, but in public, providential and powerful vindication of the Divine economy, continued through successive centuries, pouring in from all quarters and in a thousand different forms, and gathering new force and volume as ages rolled away. The solemn exposition of *the Truth* was to begin within a few hours after the impious arraignment of the Son of God, in the darkening heavens, the trembling earth and the bursting graves. One-third of a century afterward, in accordance with Christ's prediction, a terrible testimony came up from the doomed city of God, burthened with such carnage and destruction as the world never saw, when sword, fire, famine and pestilence did their rapid work, and one million one hundred thousand wretched Jews had their fearful imprecation answered—"His blood be upon us and our children." Nor was this all. The retributive anathema, rolling on down the vista of ages, was to send back its reverberations from a thousand fields, like deafening echoes from a whispering gallery, reiterating the same destiny of blood and ruin to that devoted race, whose living representatives dreaded and rejected the *Truth*. But the answer is gaining a world-wide circulation, and even now commands the faith of all civilized nations. It comes home to family circles and personal history; it is heard in the sigh of the mourner and the shout of the saint—seen in its powerful restraints upon public morals, and felt in its sanctifying peace upon individual hearts. Nor shall impressive responses to that significant question, "What is *Truth*?" cease to be furnished until the seventh angel sounds, and great voices from heaven proclaim, "The kingdoms of this world are become the kingdoms of our God and of His Christ, and He shall reign forever and ever."

Different opinions have been entertained and inculcated in regard to the true import of the brief and hasty question which Pilate propounded to the immaculate prisoner at his bar. 1st. Some have paraphrased it thus: "What is *Truth*, that you should risk your life in maintaining it, when Menander, Plato,

Proclus and the Stoics, with other ancient philosophers, taught that a lie was preferable to the truth, when it could be told to advantage?" 2d. Others have understood him to inquire, "What is that *particular* truth which you inculcate and would have us believe?" 3d. Some, again, suppose this question was put to the court and those surrounding Pilate, as though he had said, "What is the true state of facts—the true nature of the charge against the culprit at the bar?" 4th. Begging leave respectfully to differ from all these expositions, we suppose his inquiry, therefore, to authorize the following paraphrase: "You have just said, 'To this end was I born, and for this cause came I into the world, that I should bear witness unto the Truth.'" Aye, "*the Truth*." But what is Truth?—that is the question. It has been long agitated in the schools, and yet remains an unsettled problem. Pythagoras and Plato, Aristides and Aristotle, and a host of others, have all professed to teach it. But who has ever authenticated his claims? Tully has spoken from Italy—Solon from Greece—Confucius from China—Anacharsis from Scythia, and Zeno from Cyprus—and yet the great problem remains unsolved. If these profound philosophers have failed, will an ignorant Galilean—the reputed son of a carpenter, and the companion of fishermen and tax-gatherers—be likely to succeed and settle the mooted question? This taunting interrogatory was at best probably suggested as a bribe to his own tortured and remonstrating conscience, and a plea for his hasty retreat.

Pilate's question, however, has lost nothing of its force and significance by the lapse of years, but is propounded *now* to the intelligent mind of the nineteenth century, enlightened and enlarged as it is by Bible illumination and the ample experience of eighteen hundred years.

Let us, then, consider its claims.

Truth has been the subject of search for centuries by philosophers and chemists, geologists and mineralogists, mathematicians and astronomers, anatomists and physiologists, teachers and divines, by thinkers, writers and experimentalists, within their several spheres of study and of action. Wisdom has, therefore, been waging war with ignorance, prejudice and error, to enlarge the boundaries of human knowledge, and establish the claims of Truth to universal empire. For the measureless realms of Nature are hers. She is the essence and exponent of the Eternal Father, and her prerogatives are acknowledged both in heaven and on earth. The universe bears testimony to her presence, and moves in unbroken harmony in accordance with her laws. She smiles in every flower and refreshes in every breeze, rides on every wave and rolls in every river, glances in every sunbeam and shines in every star. Her rule is as implicitly obeyed in the hum of the drowsy beetle as in

the roar of the rampant lion; in the shimmering splendor of the dewdrop as in the glowing corruscations of the Aurora; in the gentle patter of the summer shower as in the crashing plunge of the avalanche. Of celestial descent—the heart of God was her birthplace, and angels bend in homage to her heavenly authority, and find their bliss in conforming to her behests.

Truth is capable of three distinctive divisions, viz. :

1. NATURAL TRUTH.

2. MORAL TRUTH.

3. EVANGELICAL OR RELIGIOUS TRUTH.

1. *Natural or Physical Truth* is but the harmonious utterances of Nature, announced through the action of her established laws. Indeed, the whole natural universe is but one grand museum of physical truth, in millionary forms; never false, but ever inflexibly and unvaryingly the same. There is no lie in all the realms of Nature, although there may be paradoxical phenomena not easily reconcilable by a finite understanding. Nor does she ever act by erratic or new-born impulses. Her legislation is as old as creation, and, in her sub-lunary dominions, at least, since God first breathed into Adam "the breath of life," no new clause has ever been introduced into her code. There are no *accidents* in the record of her reign. The thunderous fall of the Alpine avalanche, the uproar of the tempest, the rock of the earthquake, and the blasting breath of the volcano are as much regular sequences, within the range of her settled economy, as the rising sun, the waning moon, or the returning seasons. The faithful, periodical return to our skies of the eccentric comet, that

"takes his ample round  
Through depths of ether; coasts unnumber'd worlds  
Of more than solar glory; doubles wide  
Heaven's mighty cape, and then revisits earth,  
From the long travel of a thousand years,"

as strikingly illustrates her faithful reign as the consecutive phases of the morning and evening star.

But physical Truth must be "sought out" by the power of human intellect, and exemplified by the results of human labor. And the very search is destined to elevate, invigorate and refine the human mind, foster its love of Truth, enlarge its scope of moral vision, and give it more exalted ideas of the Great Creator.

It is by a constant reliance upon the unvarying truths of Nature that science, from age to age, has prosecuted her discoveries. Some of those truths are self-evident, as, *e. g.*, those upon which pure as well as mixed mathematics are founded. Thus, "All parts of the circumference of a circle are equidistant

from the center." "When two straight lines cross each other at right angles, all the contained angles are right angles." "Two things, each of which is equal to a third, are equal to one another." "The whole is equal to all its parts," etc.

Such truths are axiomatic, and require no reasoning.

From these and other recognized and established principles, Science therefore prosecutes her daring researches into the arcana of Nature, and discloses in her progress other correlative and dependent truths—extends the boundaries of thought, advances civilization, and throughout the physical universe reveals the glory of the God of Truth. And when, from the imperfect or limited power of human reason, the paucity of recorded facts, or the misapprehension of reliable postulates, the adventurous physicist rambles into error and fails to reach truthful results, it only requires that time should elapse, and more cautious and better informed successors should enter the field, conform more rigidly to Nature's veritable and unchanging laws, and the blunders and hallucinations of predecessors will be superseded by salutary and authentic results. It is by a correct apprehension, then, of the truths of somatology that progress is made in mechanics, agriculture, sculpture, painting, music, commerce, navigation, and every other practical and ornamental department of human knowledge; while the adoption and propagation of physical *falsehoods* retard progress, entail evils, and embarrass and confuse the mind, and leave it to flounder amid the mazy labyrinths of illusory conjecture.

2. *Moral Truth.* We define this to be a conformity of words and actions to thoughts and sentiments, or an exact representation of things that have been, are, or will be, and is indispensable to the existence and maintenance of all social order, security, and prosperity in a country.

Like the magnificent palace of the Incas of Cuzco, the ancient imperial city of Peru, whose ponderous stones were united by seams of melted gold, the whole social fabric is cemented by this pure and durable element, and without which the noble structure would soon totter to its fall. Falsehood makes war with God's grandest attribute, as manifested in heaven and earth, and which must ultimately triumph to vindicate the glory of His reign.

"Truth, crush'd to earth, shall rise again,  
The eternal years of God are hers :  
While Error, wounded, writhes in pain,  
And dies amid his worshippers."

In the economy of Revelation "Mercy and Truth have met together." Mercy, most lovely of the Divine attributes, hitherto restrained by the claims of unsatisfied Justice from bestowing upon the soul of man her eleemosynary gifts, pregnant with the wealth of heaven, has at length met with Truth, revealed

upon the crimson heights of Calvary; has witnessed the glorious fulfillment of God's immutable promises, which have survived the mutations of more than fifty-eight centuries, and has received her celestial commission to open the treasures of eternal life to the dying nations.

"Righteousness and Peace have kissed each other." Righteousness, whose just but rigorous exactions required more than earth could meet; and Peace, whose boundless blessings, designed for the world, and gathered from the cross of Christ, has recognized and satisfied these sublime demands, and now dwells in everlasting harmony with her pure and spotless sister. Still, in Oriental strains, sings the sweet Psalmist of Israel: "Truth shall spring out of the earth"; shall vouchsafe her appearance in this polluted world in the person of the immaculate Messiah. And "Righteousness shall look down from heaven" approvingly upon the triumphs of Truth through succeeding centuries amid the warring systems of heathen Polytheism, philosophical Naturalism, and mystic Pantheism.

But to return from these reflections. A *liar* is a curse to society, and generally the injury which he inflicts is in proportion to the position which he occupies and the extent of confidence which he may temporarily command. He foully profanes the corporeal temple, so fearfully and wonderfully made, and infamously dares to make its consecrated paraphernalia subservient to the infernal work of unsettling the foundations of all social confidence, disrupting the harmony and destroying the peace of the moral world, and at the same time clouding the lustre and retarding the progress of the Redeemer's benevolent reign. Truth looks down upon him from the glowing stars, and rings her claims upon his ear from the obedient winds upon their circuits, and speaks through the voiceless flowers at his feet; and yet his degraded soul is unmoved amid this guileless antiphony and emblazonry of Truth. His condition is a perilous and unenviable one. Like the fakirs of India or the jugglers of China, he may make the credulous populace wonder and stare for an hour, but they soon learn that there is trickery and fraud at the bottom, and his selfish and malevolent secrets will one day be disclosed upon the house-tops under the inextinguishable blaze of *Truth*.

Then, to the noble sons and daughters of my country, allow me to address a few words of kind counsel, suggested and enforced by the experience of age, the affection of a father, and the authority of revelation. Scourged and torn as we have been by the relentless demon of war—our fields laid waste, our granaries plundered, our homes committed to the flames and turned to ashes, our time-honored institutions torn up by the roots, and our fathers and husbands, and brothers and sons wrapped in bloody winding-sheets and buried upon a hundred

battle-fields, while widowhood and orphanage weep through the land, still we have had two imperishable treasures left us—our HONOR and our BIBLE. And thank heaven, they are still ours, shielded by the invulnerable ægis of TRUTH, and environed by encamping angels. A voluntary surrender alone can deprive us of these invaluable treasures. As well may the Atlantic be expected to submerge the proud peak of the Teneriffe, whose rocky rampart has for past centuries daily baffled and dispersed the angry waves at its base, as the surrounding misfortunes and ills of life ever succeed utterly to overwhelm the man or the nation whose mountain stands strong upon these enduring foundations. Would you, then, be useful, honorable and distinguished, and win the laurels of a virtuous immortality, which flourish as unfading evergreens as well upon the unepitaphed tomb of poverty as upon the sculptured mausoleum of wealth, never attempt to worm your way to eminence by the tortuous and slimy track of falsehood and duplicity—a hazardous route at best, and always intercepted by sloughs or pit-falls, or strewn with concealed torpedoes. Make an open, bold, and manly attempt, where conscience shall ever approve, honor never desert, and Truth unfailingly defend. At a time when dissimulation and treachery in diplomacy is the tolerated policy and considered as the creditable evidence of an acute mind, as in the days of the renowned Secretary of the Florentine Republic, a few unscrupulous adventurers may find their way to temporary power. But, like Macchiavelli, they may expect, if not peltings and a prison, at least a posthumous infamy, as the unenviable meed of posterity. But it must not be forgotten that at this period of our Christian civilization there is much to stimulate your laudable ambition, and spring into activity your utmost energies. Science and the arts are rapidly bringing under control the hitherto refractory elements of Nature. *Mind* has been launched upon the high seas on a voyage of discovery under the triple pressure of canvas, steam and electricity, and is now strained from mast-head to keel in cleaving the waves of the untried deep before it. All these subordinate agencies Christianity legitimately claims as auxiliary to the accomplishment of her sublime system of progression. The learning and science of the age, and the mental activity which controls the leading enterprises of the day, demand a corresponding increase of knowledge and of energy, under the sanction of the “Truth as it is in Jesus,” to defend the faith from sacrilegious intrusions and keep her altars pure. I know the country is in a state of unrest. Political animosities, financial troubles, and corruption in high places have served to keep up for a season an irritable condition of the popular mind. As the broad bosom of the great deep, which has been lashed into fury by the thong of the cyclone, still heaves and frets for

days together after the wild winds have hushed and the scourge has been withdrawn, so our national agitation has been too widely spread and tempestuous to subside within an hour after the hurricane has passed. But no storm can endure forever; its violence must be spent, and we may therefore anticipate an auspicious time, probably not far distant, when fraternal harmony, national peace and unexampled prosperity may reign over our fertile plains, so recently desolated by an excited and marauding soldiery. Evidences confirmatory of these expectations surround us to-day. Nor does the detection of gold and whiskey rings, the malignant flings of irate politicians, the criminality of defaulting officials, nor the smoke and confusion of the Presidential contest, destroy our confidence or obscure our vision. After Homer's mythological gods had fought, with sturdy oaks as their missiles, torn from his sides and summit, Mt. Atlas stood as firm and unmoved as when the struggle commenced. The conflict then is ended, and our great Republic still stands. Human passions are subsiding. International harmony is cultivated, and all the appliances and facilities for a higher Christian civilization lie out invitingly before us. We live, then, in an eventful age, and at a critical epoch of our country's history.

New and noble destinies are to be wrought out for yourselves and your posterity. Some who hear me to-day will soon succeed to the onerous duties and responsibilities of their seniors and their sires. Let them beware, scrupulously beware, of indirection or misrepresentation, and never depreciate the value of *Truth*, nor consent to compromise her claims, even in jest.

National corruption has superinduced the downfall of a hundred kingdoms; and when an open disregard to *Truth* and the claims of Heaven pervades the higher classes and characterizes the public functionaries of the land, the disastrous result is rapidly hastened. Who shall say, then, that "spiritual wickedness in high places" did not, even in this enlightened age, provoke the application of the Catalinean torch to the most magnificent pile dedicated to human liberty which the world ever saw—threatening to leave its dismembered and smouldering fragments as fearful "landmarks upon the coast of time," to warn coming generations that "sin is a reproach to any people"? And yet, there were more than 300 of the faithful and pure who had never bowed the knee to Baal, nor worshiped at the shrine of Ashtoreth; and who can tell whether their sympathizing tears and earnest prayers may not have moved the Mercy of the skies, and induced compassionate Heaven to stop the clash of steel and flow of blood, which had already sacrificed whole hecatombs of noble victims to the insatiate Moloch of war, and that the same Divine intervention may not yet enable a high-minded, patriotic and enterprising

people—chastened, sobered and softened by the bitter experiences of fraternal strife—when political tricksters, selfish demagogues and soulless vampires, who have battered upon the life blood of their struggling country, have been unmasked and exposed to popular scorn—to rear a still more stately and imposing governmental structure, under whose ample dome purer morals may characterize our statesmen, and a loftier type of Christianity adorn our institutions and exalt our common country in the eyes of the world? Then, crowned with the Divine approval, “the wilderness and the solitary place shall be glad for them; and the desert shall rejoice, and blossom as the rose.” And then may it be engraven upon the entablature of every temple, “Blessed is the nation whose God is the Lord; and the people whom He hath chosen for His own inheritance.”

3. *Evangelical or Religious Truth.* We now enter upon the consideration of the third and most important division of our theme, and in comparison with which all the other forms of *Truth* must be held inferior and subordinate, but neither antagonistic nor incompatible—rather corroborative and sustaining. For however glowing and boundless the exhibition of *physical Truth* in the surrounding universe, and however declarative of the power, wisdom and goodness of God, yet the *soul of man*, whose independent and spiritual essence claims an “*imperium in imperio*,” may live in the midst of it all, in bitter solitude and gloomy silence, without the hallowing influence and imperial reign of a richer, nobler form of *Truth*, which shall pervade its whole nature, be commensurate with all its powers, and extend its transporting consummation beyond the visible splendors of earth and sky, and into that blissful Heaven which the immortal longings of our spiritual nature so significantly foreshadow. Nor can the universal prevalence of *social Truth* and probity meet all its demands. The intelligence, refinement, and concord of virtuous society, it is true, throw many charms around domestic life, but still the consciousness of innate impurity, the pains of sickness, the agony of grief, the blight of misfortune, and fearful apprehensions in contemplating the unavoidable passage through the dark “valley of the shadow of death,” all pathetically and loudly plead for some celestial, transcendent realization for the soul—*truthful*, present and powerful as God Himself—to complete and eternize its safety and bliss.

What, then, is Truth, in this superlative and exalted sense? Let the uncreated Son of God furnish the reply in the thrilling language whose reverberations must have been still ringing through the temple, the court, and the cottage—among the stern judges of the Sanhedrim and the intolerant priests of the synagogue, even when the conscience-stung and vacillating

Procurator surrendered his immaculate prisoner to the clamor of the crowd and the curse of the cross; so long, so publicly and so impressively had He reiterated His doctrines and the purport of His mission upon the ears of astonished multitudes. Language, too, which comes down to us laden with a momentous disclosure from that eventful hour, unheeded or evaded, as it was then by time-serving rulers and a versatile populace, but unadulterated and unchanged by the mutation of ages, and solemn as the bar of God.

Hear Him: "*I am the TRUTH.*" "He that believeth in Me," (*i. e.*, the *Truth*), "though he were dead, yet shall he live. And whosoever liveth and believeth in Me, shall never die." "If ye continue in My word" (for I tell you the *Truth*), "then are ye My disciples indeed; and ye shall know the *Truth*" (for you will know *Me*), "and the *Truth*" (*God is Truth, and I am God incarnate*) "shall make you free." "If the Son therefore" (who is the First Begotten of the Father and 'the Prince of Peace') "shall make you free, ye shall be free indeed." JESUS CHRIST, then, the "WORD," who "was in the beginning with God," and "the word was God," and who "was made flesh and dwelt among us, (and we beheld His glory, the glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father), full of grace and *Truth*"—and who was "crucified, dead and buried," and arose from the dead, ascended to Heaven, and was reglorified at the right hand of the Father, for the salvation of the world, is, *par excellence*, THE TRUTH—the soul absorbing, *Evangelical Truth*, which eclipses and throws into shadow all minor Truths. Indeed, this may be regarded as the great solar center, around which all other recognized Truths in the physical and moral worlds brilliantly and beautifully revolve, on whose gravitative force they depend, and from which they receive their orbits and derive their lustre. When human *reason* faltered and failed to accomplish the more than Herculean task of supplying the immortal wants of man from creation's limited resources, *revelation*, laden with the wealth of heaven, gratuitously opened her stores, and welcomed the nations to the boundless mercies of God.

*Evangelical or Religious Truth*, then, is more absolute and inabrogable than what are regarded as the fixed mathematical and chemical verities of Nature herself, because based upon God's immutable *attributes* and His irrevocable *promises*. Nay, it gives force and dignity to moral Truth itself by its solemn sanctions and awful penalties. Unconscious, inanimate nature may, by miraculous interposition, suspend its functions and fail to obey its accustomed laws. The wild winds are hushed, and the insurgent billows sleep, when Jesus speaks to the storm-tossed lake of Galilee. The laws of gravitation are arrested at His will, and the liquid floods lie like adamant under His tread. And even the devitalized components of the animal body, disbanded

by death, and busy amid the darkness of the sepulchre in forming new aggroupments and combinations for the inorganic world, suddenly pause in their mutinous revel at the authoritative mandate of the Lord of the tomb, instantly hasten to their deserted posts, and blend once more their living harmonies in the reanimated form of the rising Lazarus.

But all the "dicta" of *Evangelical Truth*, like its great author, are modified to meet no emergencies, are subject to no varying phases, and know no change from age to age, but are the same yesterday, to-day and forever.

"The seas shall waste, the skies in smoke decay;  
Rocks fall to dust, and mountains melt away.  
But fix'd His word, His saving power remains;  
Thy realm forever lasts, thine own Messiah reigns."

So pure and godlike is this *Truth* that it has been made the exponent of the Holy Spirit, who is called the "Spirit of Truth." And in the beautiful intercessory prayer of the merciful Redeemer, He identifies himself with it, and would have us regard it as the agent of sanctification to an unregenerate world. Hence, "Sanctify them through Thy Truth. Thy word is *Truth*," supplicates the Divine Mediator. The two terms may therefore be regarded as theologically synonymous. But Christ the Son, and God the Father, are both identified with the Holy Ghost in this great work.

For Jesus proclaims, "I am the *Truth*"; and the Apostle John, under the Divine afflatus, calls Him the "*Word*" when he declares, as already quoted—John i: 14—"The *Word* was made *flesh* (and dwelt among us, and we beheld His glory as of the Only Begotten of the Father), full of grace and *Truth*." But again, by the same inspired authority, the identity is traced further in this demonstrative climax, which, in this connection, we beg leave to repeat—John i: 1—"In the beginning was the *Word*, and the *Word* was *with God*, and the WORD WAS GOD." Thus we reach the glorious syllogistic conclusion that *Jesus Christ is GOD!* a fundamental doctrine of orthodox Christendom unequivocally avowed by St. Paul in his letter to the Romans—Rom. ix: 5—"Of whom, as concerning the *flesh*, *Christ* came, who is over all, *God blessed forever*, Amen." Therefore *Truth* is the analogue of God Himself. With what august majesty and boundless dominion is *Truth* thus invested! Surely her claims are universal and her reign sempiternal! Why should we wonder, then, that the great, mysterious, and spiritual work of regeneration should be confided to its almightiness?

No man can, then, be sanctified and saved but "through the belief of the *Truth*," nor until his heart has submitted to its control. For the *heart*—the *invisible heart*, not the palpitating, material, contractile *muscle* described by anatomists—

is the seat of our emotional nature and our moral sensibilities, and must be *truthful* in its conformities to Divine impressions, as no *false* heart can ever experience the sanctifying grace of God. "For what concord hath Christ with Belial?"

But Truth, in the more general acceptation of the term, may be held "in unrighteousness." The authenticity of the Bible may be admitted, its theology adopted, its morals admired, and its sacraments and ceremonials observed, while the *heart* has rebelled against the interior reign of a scriptural godliness, closed its doors, and reared its ramparts against the spiritual appeals of *Truth*, and has never, like the happy home of Martha, Mary and Lazarus, welcomed and cherished the soul-saving visits of the benevolent Redeemer, nor tendered its all to the promotion of His honor and glory. Men of this world have often "the form of godliness, but deny the power thereof."

An intellectual recognition, then, of the truth of Biblical doctrines may be found in the *head*, shine from the pulpit and illuminate the platform, or flow from the *hands* in orthodox pages or munificent charities, while the *heart*, the consecrated temple of man's noblest sensibilities, is left in palpable darkness, without one cordial aspiration for the spirit of Truth, or one expiatory sacrifice upon her altars propitiatory of the Divine favor.

Christianity is the perfectional embodiment of moral and religious *Truth*, from the hands of a triune God, and must therefore represent the distinctive attributes of each personality in the hypostatic union, and the relationship which they severally sustain to a world of sinners. Like her perfect and illimitable Founder, to compass the full range of her redeeming power over our entire manhood, all her resources must be made available, and she must demand a triune service. *Head* and *hands* and *heart*, or *intellect*, *conduct* and *affections*, must all be consecrated at her shrine, and the lame and reluctant sacrifices which may be substituted by either for the unblemished and the voluntary which Heaven requires will be spurned from her altars, and the offense visited with a corresponding malediction.

Indeed, this Divine triplicity seems admirably symbolized in the graphic language of the great apostle to the Gentiles. After a review of the glowing constellation of the Christian virtues, he says: "And now abideth *Faith*, *Hope* and *Charity*, these *three*, but the greatest of these is *Charity*." The latter grace is worthy of this contra-distinguishing superiority, because it is the lustrous outshining of the love of God in the human heart—the great exemplifier of a spiritual religion, and a minister of mercy to a suffering world. To that *faith* then which is "anchored within the veil," that *hope*, whose rainbow spans

the darkest skies, and that *love* which is an emanation from Heaven, and embraces within its benevolent reach all the nations of the earth, our souls pay reverential homage, for all of dignity, virtue and loveliness that our finite natures can display, within and without, in Heaven and earth, are there.

But, in conclusion, Truth alone can bear the disclosures of rolling ages, the various tests of advancing mind, and meet without quailing the inquisitorial glance of the Almighty Judge. She alone can transform the awful paraphernalia of the coming throne, the blazing heavens, the fusing earth, and the rising dead, into an empyreal temple, sparkling with the glory of God, resonant with the songs of angels, and redolent with the incense of universal praise.

Pilate's question, "What is *Truth*?" has been propounded with fearful emphasis by outraged conscience, in the dying hour, to thousands of hypocritical pretenders, profane traducers, sacrilegious skeptics and godless blasphemers—overshadowing the death-room with Egyptian gloom, portentous of the deeper darkness of the bottomless pit—and been reverberated in thunder tones by the insulted Law of Sinai and the trampled blood of Calvary.

Volney and Voltaire, D'Alembert and Condorcet, Paine and Altamont, heard in the hidden depths of their souls the fearful appeal, and shuddered, from the ominous premonitions that rolled up from a looming eternity and a yawning tomb.

But those who move on heavenward, with their "loins girt about with *Truth*, and having on the breast-plate of righteousness," honoring God and keeping His commandments, will soon reach the elevated goal of a blissful destiny. And when our holy religion shall have enlightened and molded the heart of the nations; when falsehood, confounded and ashamed, shall have been driven from her last stronghold, and have fled to her native hell; when the legions of the skies and the millions of the earth shall have rallied to the trumpet's sound and encircled in shining ranks the descending throne, then shall an unclouded universe of intelligences await in hallowed rapture the Godhead's last and loftiest demonstration of *eternal love* in redemption's wondrous plan. Creation round, as if summoned to witness the grand denouement of the Divine economy, reaching through decades of by-gone ages, stands attent, and from her depths profound and her heights sublime, from her burning stars and their planetary orbs—those luminous and faithful exponents of *physical Truth*—in adoring but expressive silence, display their pantomimic wonders in feebler testimony to the wisdom, power and goodness of their Creator. *Moral Truth*, like the full-orbed moon among the stars of night, sheds its mild radiance throughout the broad empyrean, shines in every eye of the countless host, and blends in boundless

harmony the charms of every virtue. And now the crisis has come. Eternity consumes her offspring, and *time is no more*.

The SON OF GOD, rehabilitated with His Father's glory, moves to the centre of the glowing scene, to reveal the mysteries of redemption to a ruined world, and vindicate before an assembled universe *religious Truth* as it shone upon our apostate race. "His eyes" are "as a flame of fire, and on His head" are "many crowns." A rainbow encircles His brow, and on its prismatic arch is seen, "*I am Alpha and Omega, the beginning and the end.*" The hierarchy of the skies and the redeemed of all nations hang over the gorgeous pageant in admiring suspense, longing to hear the final solution of Pilate's question, "What is Truth?" when lo, the answer comes! The *mighty Truth*, the TRUTH OF TRUTHS—the soul and center of all sublunary themes—a Truth dimly known before amid the shadows of earth, but *now* gloriously illustrated by the crowned Messiah in opened heaven, and surrounded by the happy millions of the spiritual world. Let earth and sky reiterate it. It is: GOD IN CHRIST JESUS RECONCILING THE WORLD TO HIMSELF! Rejoicing creation shouts "AMEN!" The heavenly harpers seize the response and turn it into song. The one hundred and forty-four thousand of the redeemed alone can swell the loud refrain to the listening skies. But all is Heaven—transcendent Heaven. Doubt and mystery die amid the light that breaks from "the throne of God and of the Lamb," and the final anthem, "Great and marvelous are Thy works, Lord God Almighty: just and *true* Thy ways, Thou King of Saints," closes the inauguration of the reign of Truth.

# Social Inequalities and Social Wrongs.

## A SERMON

PREACHED BY J. H. Rylance, D.D., IN ST. MARK'S [EPISCOPAL] CHURCH,  
NEW YORK.

*There was a certain rich man, which was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus.—*  
Luke xvi: 19, 20.

EXPOSITORS dispute whether this account of the rich man and Lazarus is a parabolic fiction merely, or a historical fact. But the question is unimportant. Nothing of vital value in the story depends upon the decision of the dispute. For granting that the incidents as recorded here never actually took place; that the account is only a moral fiction, a parable; yet the truths it teaches or illustrates are not the less true for that. The parable merely gathers into one group detached incidents and experiences in moral life, presenting them to our thoughts in an artistic order, or stringing them together in a continuous narrative in such a way as to render them vivid and impressive to the hearer or the reader. The parable is thus a sort of moral mosaic composed of elements gathered hither and thither, it may be, and arranged for final effect in harmonious and picturesque relations. Say, then, that there never lived this particular "rich man" or this same "beggar"; that you could nowhere find in history the characters and incidents of this story grouped as they are here; that no such drama was ever enacted; that the account, in a word, is only a parable. Yet you cannot dismiss the truths which the story articulates by saying that. The account, in all its essential elements, is none the less true to the fact of experience. Though the narrative, *as a whole*, may have no historical counterpart, each essential *part* or *particular* has. You have, for instance, both in history and in life, your rich men using their wealth in self-indulgence and luxury, while utterly ignoring the claims of God and the hard necessities of their fellow men. And you have your poor men, paupers, beggars, bruised and broken in body or mind, victims of misfortune or of sin, who are neglected or spurned by your gay and festive worldling, while a future state of retribution or reward awaits both classes, where Almighty God will deal with all "according to the deeds done in the body." And these, you will observe, are the only essential truths taught in this bold and startling parable of Dives and Lazarus, as we are accustomed to style it. All else is merely tributary incident or ornament, the drapery of the doctrine, the composition and color that render the picture life-like and telling. There is a great deal in the teaching of Christ and his apostles of this moral ornamentation, which weak or one-sided minds often pervert or misapply. But we are to discriminate

between the vehicle of the truth and the truth itself, or we shall be guilty of foolish imputations upon the character and government of God. In the parable before us we have a cluster of images, all admitting of such abuse: "Abraham's bosom," the two states of the dead divided by a visible "gulf," a material "flame" of fire, with a dialogue between the father of the faithful and a lost soul. Now, all this is startling to some minds. But to men of discernment there is no difficulty in such modes of teaching. They are not only expedient, but necessary, especially to the popular understanding; for if Christ is to tell us of things that are heavenly, how are we to comprehend the doctrine unless He clothe it in images that are earthly and familiar? But we are to look through the metaphors to the truths which they illustrate; we are to lay aside the mere ornaments and accidents, and to seize the doctrines which they typify and symbolize. It is simply childish to take the types and symbols and to rest in them as if they were Divine realities; to take the "bosom" and the "flame," and the "gulf," and the "water" of this parable, for instance, as if such things actually existed in the hidden world. They are nothing but sensible images of spiritual realities; human types of Divine facts; figures for the time now present, whereby we may the better comprehend the things that are unseen and eternal.

But all this merely by the way. The subject I propose to handle in this homily is of a weightier order. It is indicated in the opening words of the parable, which I have therefore read as a text; a subject which "comes home" to our daily experience, and which some of the gravest difficulties and controversies of the times compel us to ponder: "There was a certain rich man who was clothed in purple and fine linen, and fared sumptuously every day. And there was a certain beggar named Lazarus." From which words I propose to speak to you of *Social Inequalities and Social Wrongs*.

The inequalities we cannot question. They lie open before us in every community in bold and startling contrasts. Wealth, in its sensuous or refined indulgence, with its "purple and fine linen"; with its homes filled with costly elegance, and its banquets fit for the entertainment of the gods; with its wines and music, and pictures and flowers, shut in from all sights and sounds that could disturb the dreamy bliss; the favorites of such fortune being anxious only how to stimulate the taste by some novel enchantment, or to gratify the senses by some rarer and richer delight; while in the next street, perhaps, or within the sweep of a limited radius, you have poverty in its filth and rags and wretchedness. However we may account for them, or however we may deal with them, these contrasts exist. No form of government precludes them; Christianity

has but lightly relieved them ; civilization has even intensified them, or placed them in bolder and darker relief. For equality is an attribute of savage life more completely than of any civilized society.

These social inequalities have engaged the attention and called out the exertions of thinkers and philanthropists, to mitigate, at least, the evils which spring from them : sometimes by direct measures, in relieving the needy and providing for the helpless ; sometimes by measures indirect, in educating and Christianizing men, seeking thereby to cut off the suffering that comes from ignorance and vice. And these humane exertions have accomplished, no doubt, unspeakable good ; it might almost be said that they have served to keep modern society from going to utter destruction. For there seems to be an inherent and an alarming tendency in human nature to go back, when left to itself, to a lawless and savage condition ; yet with all the good that has been wrought by Christian philanthropy, the present condition of vast masses of our race, even in so-called Christian nations, is appalling and perilous. Take our own population in evidence, and though the forces which aim to elevate men have here had large opportunity and the fairest conditions, the results are enough to fill one with despondency. The highest attainments of civilization are found in cities ; yet here, side by side with the benefits, are the darkest and most degrading evils, against which Christianity itself seems almost utterly impotent. Nor can we reasonably look for a better condition of things till social science, penetrated by a Christian spirit, shall create a healthier atmosphere and more wholesome surroundings for the masses, who are all but helpless to secure such advantages for themselves. As long as the dwelling-places of the poor are suffered to remain in the shameful and demoralizing condition in which whole sections of our own city, for instance, are found to-day ; as long as parents and children are compelled to huddle together in indecent familiarity, in quarters that are inferior to the pens of a wealthy man's cattle, baser than the very kennel that he builds for his dogs ; as long as the streets in certain neighborhoods are found in a filthy and pestiferous state, and every form of temptation is allowed to run riot at its will, we need not look for angels to emerge out of such vile and degrading conditions ; while it were folly to expect that a religious tract, or a Bible, or the occasional call of a missionary can work a miracle in a population blinded and hardened by circumstances like these. Nor need we wonder if, amid such classes, we find sentiments prevalent upon which "the good" and the well-to-do look with such a devout horror : infidelity, which esteems your priests and preachers as impostors often, or as employed to flatter the rich, and to soothe the poor only to keep them

quiet ; labor, in a state of almost constant unrest and struggle against capital, from a distorted conviction that somehow capital is necessarily at enmity with labor, and so conspiring against it, in defiance of the teachings of a sound political economy ; with more or less sympathy with "communism," which proposes to dissolve, by force if need be, the existing order of society, and to reconstruct it upon the basis of equality ; to create a commonwealth in which there shall be neither surplus wealth nor oppressive poverty.

These sentiments and aims have gained, as yet, no such general hold of the industrious classes in this country as that which obtains in the large cities of Europe. For one reason, because the hereditary wrongs and antagonisms do not exist here against which communism is a wild sort of protest : and for another reason, because of the more general dissemination of intelligence and material comfort here, as compared with the condition of the masses of the people in the "Old World." No large proportion of our "working" men (using the designation in the accepted sense) are capable of being deluded, I believe, by the dreams of socialism. Wherever such schemes have been tried, they have not only proved abortive, but they have made manifest the fact that they are absurd in conception ; for they ignore and trample upon the ordinations of Providence (or of nature, if we prefer so to speak) in seeking to reduce all men to one common level. There are radical, constitutional disparities in men, and these disparities will surely work themselves out into tangible results in the strife and competition of life. Some men are naturally more skillful, industrious and prudent, or they are more virtuous than others ; and these will excel where the vicious and indolent and incompetent will fail. Not only would it be unjust, therefore, to share results equally between these two classes, but society would be a grievous loser, since such an administration would prove a discouragement to ambition and energy, and confer a preëminence upon indolence and incompetency. There is a doctrine of equality which is just and rational which asserts that there shall be no privileged classes in the community, which denies all partiality on account of creed or pedigree ; but the theory which would abolish all meritorious distinctions among men, and distribute the gains of industry or of genius to all alike, is not only unjust, but absurd, and in practical operation must needs prove a failure, since it is an organized contradiction of the will and ordinations of God. Place all men on one common level of social standing and privilege to-morrow, and before nightfall inequalities will be seen to emerge from the social monotony. Divide the wealth of Christendom equally among all its citizens to-day, and ere a week shall have passed some will have squandered what they had, while others will have

gained. There can be no social equality in wealth, or in the advantages it brings, so long as men differ so essentially in their constitutional endowments, and in the capabilities and habits which decide their condition. Socialism, therefore, in the sense I have indicated, is either a folly or an imposture.

But these inequalities, though of Divine ordination, as we hold, and though they contribute, when wisely adjusted, to the happiness and progress of society, are a frequent and fertile occasion of wrong between individuals and classes of men.

The wealthy, on the one hand, are tempted by their seclusion and material contentment to be unmindful of the necessities and sufferings of the poor; while the poor are apt to be suspicious and resentful toward the rich. Such alienations are seldom as marked or as bitter in our own country as they are in less favored sections of Christendom, but, under special provocations, they assert themselves here.

Now, of such wrongs, we have a typical example in the parable before us. Nothing is told us in the story to indicate that the "rich man" was in any way actively cruel or unjust toward the "beggar" who lay at his gate. It was probably a customary sight to him, while the same thing obtained all around him no doubt. His sin was simply the sin of indifference or neglect, which is a light sin in the estimation of men, but heavy and black, it would seem, in the estimation of God. "But has not a man a right to do what he will with his own? If he has acquired his wealth by industry or received it through the law of a righteous inheritance, may he not spend it, if he will, upon himself, or upon his family, in any pursuit or indulgence not positively vicious"? That would seem to be allowable at least; and yet a moment's reflection reveals not only the iniquity, but the folly of the plea. For the man is a member of a community which has obligations and burdens to bear, and if one man may ignore such responsibilities, another man, and all men, may; and then what would be the worth of the wealth which the man called his own? For such selfishness would soon work the ruin of society. It is not the demand of religion alone that "the strong" shall bear the infirmities of "the weak." The State makes the same demand for the maintenance of institutions without which men would rapidly degenerate to barbarism. There is a school of social economists who are preaching very vigorously just now the gospel of "natural selection"; who tell us that in "the struggle for existence" the helpless ought to be allowed to "go to the wall," or that the strong may rightfully "trample out the weak." Mr. Darwin, for instance, upbraids our Christian civilization with placing impediments in the way of the law, which would allow the survival of none but "the fittest," complaining that, while "with savages the weak in body or mind

are soon eliminated, we civilized men do our utmost to check the process of elimination" by building "asylums for the imbecile, the maimed and the sick," his reproaches culminating in the charge that, by these and other blindly human measures, we allow our "worst animals to breed." But our best "animals would be found very poor specimens of men if life were thus emptied of the sweet humanities." The race would lose infinitely more of greatness, of energy, of variety, of activity, of mental and moral stimulus of every kind, by the rigid application of the animal law of natural selection to human affairs and purposes, than it could possibly gain in purity of breed. In fact, there would be no room at all left for the highest dispositions, if the "catch-who-can" principle of natural selection were to govern the conscience and to inform the motives of men. In pushing the competitive principle beyond its legitimate point, and making it supreme over the life of a being capable of self-sacrifice, we should only degrade man to a level next beneath him, "and cut off at a blow the last upward step of his progress. The plan of God seems to be to ennoble the higher part of His universe, not so much by eliminating imperfection as by multiplying graces and virtues. He balances the new evils peculiar to human life by infinitely greater weights in the scale of good, which is also peculiar to human life. 'Natural selection' has its place and its function, doubtless, even among us. But over it, and high above it, is growing up a principle of supernatural selection, by our free participation in which we can alone become brethren of Christ and children of God. Christ tells us *not* to help to extinguish poor and maimed and blighted forms of life lest they spoil the breed; but to have faith that every act of wise self-sacrifice, every transfer of blessings from the strong, happy or wealthy who can spare them to the weak, miserable or poor, who might otherwise dwindle and perish, is a vindication of that higher law of supernatural selection by virtue of which the 'weak things of the world confound the mighty, and the things which are not bring to naught the things which are.' "

But we cannot be blind to wrongs which are sometimes done at the opposite end of the social scale. The rich may be often selfish, indifferent, cruel; but the poor are not all saints. A bitter and an indiscriminate jealousy is cherished by many, while conspiracies are formed, when occasions tempt, against the necessary powers and privileges of capital. Demagogues impose upon the ignorance and prejudices of the masses, charging the wealth of the well-to-do is wrung from the blood of the poor man's veins, while the charity which is doled out to the needy is often conferred in such a supercilious spirit, it is alleged, with such patronizing airs, or with such keen, caustic moralizings, as offend the self-respect of every one who has a spark of

manhood remaining in him. Nor can it be denied that there is just occasion sometimes for such angry resentments of poverty. Yet such imputations are basely unjust as applied to multitudes who, in our churches, or at large in society, are the very "salt of the earth." We very justly rely upon education to do much toward reconciling the alienated affections and interests; but much more depends, I believe, upon the prevalence of the great social virtues which Christianity inculcates, upon the virtues of justice, generosity and charity, without which all other means are feeble and ineffectual. It is the office of religion to contribute most effectively toward social concord and coöperation—not so much by teaching, as some would have us believe, the science of a Christian socialism, but by leavening society with Christian spirit; by bringing all men to see and acknowledge that they are the children of the Father in heaven, and that, though occupying diverse conditions, they are to serve each other as brethren. For, spite of the intervals that separate us, we are "members one of another," and if one member or class suffer, damage inevitably ensues to the whole fraternity. Sometimes Providence reminds us of this in a rude and an alarming way—as when the pestilence, engendered, perhaps, in the hovels of indigence and vice, sweeps through a city or empire, scattering desolation in its course, in cottage and palace alike. History tells us, too, of the misery and ruin which sometimes come to peoples from neglect of the duties which belong to social fellowship, from the undue separation of class from class, and the conflict of alienated interests; when a community is no longer held together by intelligence and sympathy, and the sense of mutual dependencies and obligations. Hence the conspiracies and convulsions in States where such evils have had unmitigated sway—as in France, under the old *régime*—till the neglected and oppressed rose up in multitudes, stung by a sense of injustice endured by their class for centuries, and hurled the corrupt institutions of society into a hideous ruin.

In this country, thanks be to God, the occasions of such disasters have at most but a limited influence. But we are far from having attained the ideal of a Christian commonwealth; and we are further from it to day, it would seem, than at certain past periods of our history. Evils which were once thought to be the consequences of institutions which we had discarded, or of abuses from which we thought ourselves forever free, have reappeared here, and are spreading with an ominous rapidity, spite of the equal privileges and magnificent opportunities we have enjoyed; spite of the "simpler manners" and "purer laws" of which we once made our boast. Even our religion, instead of cementing the social structure, is too often a disorganizing element, the churches having come very generally to recognize and to pander to caste distinctions, making costly provision for the wealthy and refined, while to the outcast multitudes

we fling the mere scraps and crumbs from our ecclesiastical tables, thus alienating the hearts of the common people, while some we have filled with a bitter scorn. And this alienation will go on and increase, I fear, till the church reasserts her power as the impartial friend and defender of all, "by taking the lead, with her concerted strength, in all beneficently social movements, in all philanthropic enterprises; by her concern for the down-trodden and oppressed, lifting them up in their redeemed humanity; by her advocacy of the righteous rights of man; by her not winking at the complacent notions of wealth and power, that the Dives and Lazarus of the parable are the normal conditions of social Christendom; \* \* \* by her not leaving plans for the melioration of the humbler classes wholly to the State, as if no business of hers; by doing justice to her Christ; by giving men to behold Him as the Supreme Philanthropist; the Christ, not of her theologues and scribes, but the Christ of Matthew, Mark, Luke and John, full of human pity and love; the Liberator from the slavery of a selfish power, from the grinding of Mammon; the Almighty Redeemer and Judge, with whom 'there is no respect of persons.'\*" If our Christianity is to become a prevalent power for good in modern society, it must have an ear and a heart open for such matters. The urgency is daily increasing for our "priests" and preachers to remit their interest in ecclesiastical ornamentation and the theologies of the schools, and to bend their endeavors to the furtherance of practical godliness. It may be a pleasant thing to look on our sleek orthodoxy as it fans itself and simpers in our fashionable churches; but how few of us think of the thousand immured in dens into which no ray of spiritual light ever enters! Yet we call these our brethren; they, too, are the children of God, many of whom were taught in their infancy perhaps to say, "Our Father." Some of them are very degraded and ugly specimens of humanity, no doubt; but, before we denounce, were it not well to inquire how they came into such a miserable plight? Some of them were born into it, and our civilization and our Christianity have done but little as yet to deliver them out of it. Meanwhile we can surely do something better than heap damnation on our outcasts and sinners. The gospel which Jesus preached comprised very little of that sort of material. He talked of mercy; He stooped down to the most degraded; He sent His disciples after lost sheep; He taught us that men are much better than beasts. If we call ourselves His followers, let us manifest His spirit, and thus compel even the doubting and the disbelieving to acknowledge the beauty and power of true religion; of the only religion which affirms the brotherhood of men as springing out of the common Fatherhood of God, and "the redemption that is in Christ Jesus our Lord." Amen.

## Agnosticism.

### A SERMON

PREACHED IN THE CITY TEMPLE, LONDON, ENGLAND. BY Joseph Parker, D.D.

*By what means he now seeth, we know not; or who hath opened his eyes, we know not. . . . We know not from whence He is. . . . Why, herein is a marvellous thing, that ye know not from whence He is, and yet He hath opened mine eyes.*—John IX: 21, 29, 30.

AGNOSTICISM means Not-Know-ism, or Know-nothing-ism, and it describes the state of mind of persons who say about God, and the Bible, and the Spiritual world and the future, that they do not know anything. Let us clearly understand their case. They do not *deny* the existence of God, they say they do not *know* it; they do not *deny* that there is a spiritual power, they simply say they do not *know* it. They wish, therefore, to say nothing about God or the Spiritual world; they are not profane atheists; they are not vulgar infidels; they are not pronounced antagonists; they occupy a negative position; they do not know; they are not certain; they do not deny, they simply do not know. This is a position occupied by very distinguished men. Against those men personally I have not one word to say. On the contrary, we are very much indebted to some of them. We are proud of their ability and their learning, and we justly glory in their illustrious fame. But if they are right, some of us are fatally wrong. We ought, therefore, to look into the case, and to find out what foothold we have, and what degree of certainty we can claim for the doctrines which we preach with so much boldness and persistency. The men in question say, "We do not know;" Christian teachers say, "We *do* know." What, then, are we to make of two statements which are simple contradictions of one another?

Let us get a clear notion of the first position, which is, that there is a book which professes to tell us about God, and the spiritual world, and the future. The men, therefore, who say that they do not know these things, do, as a matter of fact, ignore the testimony of that book. I am not now saying whether they are right or wrong in doing so. I am merely pointing out the very significant and important fact, that in taking up their know-nothing position they simply set aside the Bible, saying about it as they say about other things, that they do not know who wrote it, or by whose authority it was written. In an argument like this I should be guilty of begging the question if I pointed to the Bible as my authority for knowing something about God and the Invisible. I am well

aware of that, therefore I do nothing of the kind. But I do insist upon pointing out the fact that in my opinion a serious responsibility is incurred by those persons who simply ignore the authority of such a book as the Bible. I do not say of any book, but of a particular book, specially and emphatically of such a book as the Bible ; and in saying *such* a book, I do not refer to its poetry, its prophecy, its history, but to its distinctively *moral* tone.

And I would point out, further, that if we are at liberty to ignore such evidence as is tendered without giving our reason for ignoring it, there is no ground for believing anything in the history of mankind. I do not know that what is called the science of geology has made any progress. But there are the books which prove it; but I ignore them; I cannot receive them as authoritative; those very books may themselves be corrected in future editions; besides, I have no personal acquaintance with the men who wrote them; they may have been unequal to the task; they may have gone to the rocks *with* a theory and not *for* one; they may have worked under imperfect conditions of climate; they may have mistaken a part for the whole. If you tell me that the men do not claim infallibility for their theories, I answer that fallibility constitutes in itself no particular claim to my regard and confidence. We are not bound to fall in love with a theory simply because it is *not* infallible. We are not called upon to admire a speculation because of its fallibility! It seems to be supposed that we have only to pronounce a theory to be distinctly incomplete and fallible in order to gain for it the universal admiration and trust of mankind. Suppose I say that I cannot be troubled with the examination of a hundred incomplete and fallible theories; that I will wait until some theory is authoritatively and finally established, and that then I will accept it once for all; then that very theory would bring upon itself the identical charge that is brought against the Bible, viz., That it staggers the faith of mankind by the supremacy and finality of its claim. If we are at liberty to set aside the standard books of any religion—simply to set them aside—whether the religion be pagan or Christian, or anything else—we can very much simplify the difficulties of civilization. If my answer to the Koran is the fire, I can make short work of Mohammedanism. But by what process have I arrived at the infallibility which enables me to pronounce upon the fallibility of every one who opposes me? To say that I do not know them may be to argue myself unknown! To shut my ears against their arguments may preserve my personal equanimity, but it settles nothing. On all these grounds I am anxious not only to show that to ignore the Bible is to incur a grave responsibility, but to expose the monstrousness of the supposi-

tion that mere fallibility constitutes in itself any claim to the special acceptance or adoration of mankind,—to point out the absolute puerility of the notion that if the Bible had claimed less, it would have been worth more; that if it had spoken uncertainly, it would have secured our confidence; and that if it had told us nothing, we should have been more disposed to believe it!

Now, as a matter of fact, the Bible is as positive and distinct in its statements as it is possible for human language to be. Its formula is, "Thus saith the Lord." This fact increases the responsibility of those who ignore the Book. I will not in this connection say that the claim of the Bible settles its authority—that suggestion opens an independent argument; but I point it out as the most distinct, clear, positive, unequivocal and absolute claim that any book can make, and therefore the responsibility of ignoring it is the more serious. Let it be acknowledged, if you please, that the mere claim, as a claim, settles nothing; it must also be admitted that, on the other side, nothing is settled by simply ignoring the claim.

Now, my object will be to ascertain with all the positiveness of the most positive science what we do actually and unquestionably *know* about the Bible. I will make no appeal to imagination; not a single speculative faculty will I disturb; I will confine myself to facts as simple, as stern, and as indubitable as the fact of your existence at this very moment; and if those facts can be established, I shall feel myself entitled to say to all agnostics, Why, herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not from whence it is, and yet it hath opened mine eyes. I will occupy the practical ground of David: "The law of the Lord is perfect, converting the soul; the testimony of the Lord is sure, making wise the simple; the statutes of the Lord are right, rejoicing the heart; the commandment of the Lord is pure, enlightening the eyes." So, then, this argument will not be started from the metaphysical, but from the practical side; if the effect is good, I shall feel emboldened to teach that the cause must be good; if the effect is divine, I shall not shrink from the audacity of teaching that the cause which produces it is also divine.

Now what are the facts connected with Christian revelation about which there can be no serious dispute?

1. *It is a fact that bad men dislike it, avoid it, and are afraid of it.* As a practical argument this amounts to a great deal. No unrighteousness can be vindicated by Christian revelation; not only so, no unholy *thought*, no dishonorable *motive* is tolerated by that revelation; it searches the thoughts and tries the reins of the children of men; it says that unholy anger is murder, and that unlawful desire is sin. For these reasons bad men do not

consult it, guilty men flee from its judgments, mean men shrink from its standards. This revelation is not to be found in the hands of the gambler, in the dens of the unclean, in the haunts of the vicious; there it is derided, and shunned, and denounced. This is one of the things that we *know*. This is as distinct a *fact* as can be found in the whole circle of positive science, and as a fact it is to be accounted for and explained. If the ruler is a terror to them that do evil, the presumption is that he represents the spirit of justice and honor and goodness. If the Christian revelation is avoided by bad men, the presumption is that the moral tone of that revelation is intolerable to their injured and reproachful conscience.

2. *It is a fact that where the Christian revelation is received and thoroughly acted upon, the result is a purified morality.* You will find the proof of this alike in the humblest and in the loftiest social circles. The city missionary will prove it to the letter. When men stand up in the court of the world, give their histories, their names, and their addresses, you are bound either to receive or to disapprove their evidence. It is trifling with a great question simply to ignore it. It is not scientific to treat a fact as a fiction. Now, what is the kind of evidence which can be substantiated in every jot and tittle, which is given as respects the Christian revelation? It is this: "The Christian revelation has made me see human life in a new light; it has probed me, and humbled me, and shown me to myself; it has made me attend to the improvement of my physical and social condition; it has made me send my children to school, pay my debts, refund ill-gotten gain, apologize to my inferiors, forgive my enemies, and recognize my stewardship; it has given a new tone to my life, a new outlook to my hope, a new object to my desires; I feel it, my neighbors see it, my family rejoice in it." The man is not a fiction; he is standing there; he is identified by his father and mother and neighbors, and we are bound either to receive his testimony or to disprove it: it will not do for us to say that we know not whence this revelation is, unless we are prepared for the retort, Why, herein is a marvelous thing, that ye know not whence it is, and yet it hath opened my eyes. This change is either a fact or not a fact. And if it be scientific and grand to mark the progress of a horse's development, it cannot be despicable to trace the changes and advances of a human mind.

3. *It is a fact that the Christian revelation compels those who really and truly believe it to exert themselves in every possible way for the good of mankind.* It does not leave such an exertion an open question; nor does it allow its believers to await the occurrence of opportunities. It says, You must search out the cause that you know not; be eyes to the blind and be a tongue to the dumb; plead the cause of the fatherless and the widow;

go ye into all the world and preach the gospel to every creature. It allows no ignoble ease. It smites every self-indulgent excuse. It approves all labor, sacrifice, and devotion for the good of others. If a man falls below this standard he brings upon himself condemnation and judgment the most unsparing. If you remind me that many who profess the Book are not what they ought to be, I answer, That is true, and nowhere are they so severely condemned as in the Book itself. It is not their Christianity that makes them bad, but their want of it. Wherever the Christian revelation has free course, it stirs the purest impulses and rouses the noblest ambition of men. Jesus Christ went about doing good, and Jesus Christ insisted that His example should be the law of His followers.

4. *It is a fact that in those countries which are specially noted for allowing the free use of the Bible, liberty, education, and science are held in the highest honor.* This is not a matter of speculation; it is a matter that can be tested and proved with absolute completeness. It is proved in England, in Germany, and in America. If you remind me that in those countries there is much infidelity and much immorality, I do not deny it, simply because where there is much light, there is likely to be much shadow; and where there is much liberty, there is likely to be some license.

If in view of all these considerations, and the facts of which they are but a sample, you remind me that it has never been denied that there are good things in the Bible, I am bound to answer that the compliment is more cruel than the indifference. Christian revelation is not a string of miscellaneous and unrelated proverbs; it is a unity; it is an organism; and whether one member suffer, all the members suffer with it. And if it comes to a question of authority, we are entitled to ask, Who gave you authority to pick and choose? Who gave you authority to say to people you may take this and leave that? If you refer to your sense, we are further entitled to ask, Who gave you authority to pit your sense against the sense of other people, or to measure the universe by the small and uneven globe of your own head? Those high moral elements referred to, and those high moral results, are so inwrought with the very tissue and substance of the Bible that they cannot be removed without violence and injury. They are not cold laws, or arbitrary injunctions; they come out of a life unseen but omnipresent, and descend into the arena of time with all the solemnity and grandeur of eternity.

We are further entitled to inquire, What it is to *know*? Do we *know* nothing more than we can touch with our finger, add up on a slate, or pierce with an iron weapon? Does all that we *know* come to us through our five senses, and through our five senses alone? Do we know nothing by consciousness, by in-

sight, by sympathy, by the witness of our own spirit? Is there not a realizing or verifying faculty higher than that which is usually known as sense? The knowledge that is ascertainable by sense does not touch the soul in its highest moods, its angriest vexations, its most tragical distresses; it does not touch pain of mind, the grief of bereavement, the agony of helplessness, the compunction of sin, the intolerableness of remorse. Is nothing to be done for man under such circumstances? Is he curtailed within a little space, precise, measurable and inexpansive, to learn everything within the narrow enclosure? Has he no dreams, no longings, strivings, pantings after the invisible? Who has due authority to tell him to restrain these and to shut himself up within his visible cell? Who is armed with authority to beat down the prayer that springs unbidden to his lips? Who signed the letters of authority by which the Sauls of the day come to the Damascus of the soul to hale the rising hopes, the sacred passions, the vehement desires, that go out after the Mystery of things, and to bind these throbs and pulses in the iron of exact and inexorable propositions? This demand for authority must not be confined to the Christian revelation alone; it must be pressed impartially, and be applied as rigorously in the school as in the church.

What we know of the Bible is enough to make us hold on our course of profession, exposition and confidence. Still, the house is blessed that gives it loving welcome; still, the sick bed is irradiated beside which it is lovingly read; still, it sheds its abundant promises on the good man's grave; still, it lures little children as by a mighty spell; still, it tells the prodigal that in his Father's house there is bread enough and to spare; and still, it comes into the soul with warning and hope when other teachers can only stand afar off and mutter their feeble incantations.

## Christ Absent and Yet Present.

### SERMON

BY Dean Stanley, PREACHED IN WESTMINSTER ABBEY, LONDON, ENGLAND.

*For Christ is not entered into the holy places made with hands, which are the figures of the true; but into heaven itself, now to appear in the presence of God for us.—*  
Hebrews ix: 24.

THE first Sunday after Trinity brings before us an aspect of the Christian religion which it is good for us from time to time to contemplate. The great festivals of the Church are over; the chief events of our Lord's life on earth have been celebrated; the whole result of them, in the great doctrine of the Holy Trinity, was commemorated last Sunday. Henceforth, there is nothing in the Church services but one unbroken tenor of ordinary Sundays onward till Advent, we might almost say till Christmas; but, in this very fact, is brought out a doctrine which we often hear discussed, and which is well put before us in the text we have just heard in this evening's service from the Epistle to the Hebrews. It is the doctrine of Christ's real presence—that is to say, the doctrine which teaches us in what sense He is absent, and in what sense He is present. And there is this further reason for endeavoring to have a clear view of this doctrine, that (as it is well known by many) a controversy, one of the hundreds which have been provoked upon this subject in various times, has arisen concerning it, which has been the subject of a legal decision by the Supreme Court of Appeal in the Church of England. It is well, therefore, that we should have a distinct view of the doctrine as it is set before us in the Bible, the essential doctrine, which no special controversy can affect, and which no legal question is likely to disturb.

First, then, IN WHAT SENSE IS CHRIST ABSENT? In His outward, bodily manifestation He is gone from among us. The historical, earthly manifestation of Jesus Christ our Lord closed on the hill at Bethany. Whatever else may chance, yet to one thing we must make up our minds: that gracious countenance will no more be seen by mortal eye, in crowded city or on lonely mountain; that thrilling voice will be no more heard in the courts of the temple, or on the shores of Gennesaret. If here and there, in after ages, there may seem to have been a touch of that vanished hand, a whisper of that Divine speech, it will have been only in ecstatic trance, not in actual form and shape. Such an appearance came to Paul, amid a blaze of light and horror of great darkness, on his road to Damascus; and to John, amid the seven stars of the seven golden candlesticks, on the solitary rocks of Patmos. And even, in later times, stories have been told, of more or less authenticity, how the mystic Italian saint

believed that on the heights of the Apennines he had gazed on the form of the Crucified ; or, again, how the famous artist, Benvenuto Cellini, as he lay in his dungeon meditating suicide, saw in the visions of the night the figure of the Redeemer, reviving hope within him—in a form so vivid that he carved its likeness in ivory, as may still be seen in the Church of the Escurial ; or, again, how the Scottish Presbyterian soldier, Colonel Gardiner, was raised from a life of sin by a like midnight vision, and by the gracious words, “ I have done so much for thee, and wilt thou do nothing for Me ? ” But all these appearances are, as I have said, inward rather than outward experiences ; and even if they were outward experiences, yet we must regard them as rare, transitory exceptions. From the world and from the Church at large the Lord is gone. We see not His face, we hear not His words. “ Henceforth,” as the Apostle says, “ we know Him no more after the flesh.” He has entered into no holy places made with hands ; He dwells not in any altar, in any chalice or bread ; even the great old Roman Church, which has done more than any other to localize and materialize His presence in these external things, has, in fact, in the very form of expressing this doctrine, protested against it. It would be easy to show, were this the time and place, how, amid the entanglement of imaginary physics and false metaphysics, it nevertheless has this merit, that it indicated, at any rate at the time of its first invention, a dim, confused sense of the great truth expressed in the text, namely, that whatever presence of Christ is set forth in the Holy Eucharist, it is not, and cannot be, outward and material ; it must be something invisible, and therefore spiritual. Doubtless, that has often been lost sight of both in the Roman and in other Churches. Doubtless, from the wish either to exalt the sacrament, or from a desire to bring this presence down to the level of our senses, all sorts of fancies and fables have been imagined ; but the truth still remains, and is universally acknowledged, that a cloud has raised Him out of our sight—a great gulf is fixed between this world and the next : “ He is not here, He is risen.” “ Doth this offend you ? What and if ye shall see the Son of man ascend up where he was before ? ” “ The flesh profiteth nothing.”

But this leads me to the best mode of dealing with all such questions, and, having thus shown in what sense Christ is absent, to show in what senses He may be said to be present.

There are, then, three senses in which the Bible tells us that He is present with us still, although withdrawn from our actual sight. First, while He is gone in the flesh, He remains in the Spirit. The dispensation of the Son is over, the dispensation of the Spirit has begun. “ The flesh profiteth nothing ; it is the Spirit that quickeneth.” It is not without significance that

the festival of Whitsunday, the festival of the Holy Spirit, follows immediately on the festival of the Ascension, and that the even tenor of our common duties as Christians follows after the festival of Whitsunday in a long succession of "Sundays after Trinity." If one may so say, the departure of the Saviour was an indispensable condition for this presence of the Spirit. He Himself has told us, "It is expedient that I go away, for if I go not away, the Comforter will not come to you." It must surely have been so in the very nature of things. Had Christ remained on earth, the actual, visible, local ruler and centre of a visible, local society in Palestine, it is, humanly speaking, impossible that the Church could have become universal. It must have been controlled and swayed, even against its will, even against the will of its Divine Founder, by the Syrian, Eastern conditions of the capital of its empire. It is this necessity which made the destruction of the city of Jerusalem so important for the future freedom and growth of Christianity. It is this which has always rendered the attempt to rule the Church or the world from any single local centre either an impossibility or an evil. Again, it was only by His withdrawal that the attention of men could be diverted from the outward form of His appearance, and fixed on His inward, essential character. Even as it is, enough and too much of superstition has gathered round the external footsteps and relics of His earthly presence. How much would this have been intensified had these footsteps and these relics been indefinitely multiplied; and, on the other hand, how much deeper and fuller has been the impression, the knowledge, the reverence for His character and nature since He left us than when He was with us. Often, in earthly saints and heroes, have we seen that the work of good men has been felt and understood only after they have been removed; and that the dead which they slew in their deaths were more than the dead which they slew in their lives.

Again and again has this happened, that the words of a father, a friend, a teacher, have acquired double force from the fact that we can now hear them no more; they are gone, and the utmost that we can do to show our regard for them is to reproduce their likeness in ourselves and others, to recognize and honor their likeness wherever we see it, to do always as we know that they would wish if they were present and could see us. So, in the highest degree, is the feeling which the world ought to entertain toward its departed Redeemer. Even as regards human history He is, as has been well said, a thousand times more alive, a thousand times more loved, than in the thirty years of His transit upon earth. The more deeply we revere, the more profoundly we adore, so much the more ought we to bear in mind that the best way

in which we can bring Him close to us, in which we can show our sense of what He was and what He is, is to carry on His spirit, to endeavor to understand His words, to make them our law of life, our guide of action. The chief mode in which He has Himself declared that He is present with us is this, in His words He still lives. The words, the commandments, that He has spoken to us, they are spirit, and they are life. This, then, is the first of the three senses of His presence of which I spoke. By the departure of the actual, outward, historical physical Christ, we learn the value of the moral, spiritual, inward, invisible Christ, who can never die from among us so long as we retain a single fragment of His discourses, a single spark of His spirit, a single scent of the savor of the sanctifying, civilizing, purifying atmosphere which He breathed into the world. Even were He to be actually present in bodily form on the altars of our churches, the bodily form would profit us nothing except as an indication of His spirit. Even were the substance, or even the accidents, of the bread changed into the substance or the accidents of His body; even were the substance, or even the accidents, of the wine changed into the substance or the accidents of His blood, still the body and the blood themselves would be but figures to represent something deeper. When He Himself said, "Except a man eat my flesh, and drink my blood," He assuredly did not mean His outward, visible flesh, and His outward, visible blood; He meant the inward spirit, the spiritual life, of which His outward natural presence was but the vehicle and the symbol. Even in human beings, whether living or dead, it is not the outward frame, dear as that is to us, it is not that which we regard as *themselves*; it is the spirit within, that and that only is the man; and so much more is it with the Son of man, who is the Son of God. "The Lord is the Spirit," as the Apostle says. This is what is intended in our service when we are told that we spiritually eat the flesh and drink the blood; when we pray that we may so eat the flesh and so drink the blood of Christ that our sinful bodies may be made clean by His body, and our souls washed through His most precious blood, and that we may evermore dwell in Him, and He in us. Neither the outward body nor the outward blood, any more than the outward bread and the outward wine, can make clean or wash clean the sins of either body or soul. It is the Spirit only that can do this. Not that which goeth into a man, but that which cometh out of a man, this it is which alone has power either of cleansing or defiling the mind and the heart. There are legends in the Roman Catholic Church of visions which have been seen of a child seated on the altar, bearing the Eucharistic service, as this is represented in a carving in this church as having ap-

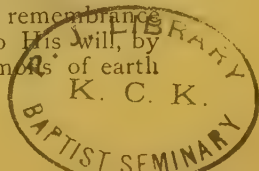
peared to the founder of this abbey. There is a like story of a poor idiot boy of the Presbyterian Church of Scotland, who, after long entreaties, having persuaded the minister to give him his father's bread in the sacrament, exclaimed, "I have seen the pretty man," and was found dead in his bed that night from excess of rapture. These stories express well the devotion of the age and of the individual, but we know, whether true or false, they can but represent to us the spiritual thought or inward vision. If such visions had the effect which we hope on those who saw them, we may be perfectly sure it was the effect upon the heart, and not on the outward senses.

There is, however, a second special sense in which the Bible speaks of the presence of Christ. It is with a profound meaning that the ascension is recorded at the beginning of the Acts of the Apostles, that the withdrawal of Christ is thus represented as the beginning of the history of the Christian Church. He is gone; whom has He left to take His place? He is gone; who is there that can continue to be His witnesses, to hand on His light, to be the vehicles of His spirit? His words no doubt, as I have said, are much, and these are recorded for us in the four Gospels; but books are not enough, even the most sacred books are insufficient of themselves to keep alive spiritual life. Are there no more direct and more living representatives of Christ our Lord? Yes, there are, and the answer is very simple. It is you yourselves, it is we ourselves, every Christian man, woman and child, every man, woman, and child that has any chance or opportunity of showing forth the Christian gifts and graces which were shown forth in Him; they are His witnesses, they are the signs of His presence. Just as when a friend or father leaves the world we feel that his family, his sons, are his likenesses, his legacies to those who survive; so the good, the innocent, the brave, the pure, wherever found, are the monuments, the memorials of Christ our Redeemer. By admiring them we admire Him; by loving them we love Him; by serving and helping them we are serving and helping Him. This is what He means when He says, "Inasmuch as ye have done this to the least of these my little ones, ye have done it unto me"; or when He says, "He that receiveth them receiveth me"; or when He says, "Lo, I am with you always, even unto the end of the world." This it is which is meant when St. Paul says that the Church, that is, the Christian society or community, the whole mass of Christian believers, is His body, that is, we may almost say, is Christ Himself. The Christian philosopher, Coleridge, said, in a saying which I believe I have quoted more than once, that there were two main evidences of Christianity, namely, Christianity and Christendom: Christian-

ity, that is, the internal evidence of the Divine wisdom and goodness, or the words and work of Christ: Christendom, that is, the external evidence of the good effects left in the world by the good lives, the good laws, the noble arts, the glorious poetry, the splendid architecture, the increasing science, the domestic purity, the widespread beneficence, the humble truthfulness, the strict justice, the simple unselfishness, wherever we find it, in Christian nations, in Christian churches, Christian families and Christian individuals. Had Christ been merely withdrawn, and left no followers behind Him, humanly speaking, we may say, Christianity itself would have expired. His removal, His ascension, which is in one sense the end, is in another and higher sense the beginning of His course, because, as He has told us, we are to carry on the work. As ancient legislators used to leave the state which they had founded, in order to throw it upon its own resources, to make it feel that it could thrive and grow only by manly, independent growth, by appropriating and assimilating to itself the spirit and the mind of its benefactor, so Christ left the world and the Church in order that it might grow, by the spirit with which it was instinct, unto the fulness of the stature of Himself. This, then, is the second sense of Christ's presence on earth. He is gone that we may take His place. We love and serve God, whom we do not see, by loving and serving our brethren, whom we do see. I have spoken before of those legends which represent the visible appearance of Christ in the Eucharist, and which, so far as they have had any Christian meaning, represented that He was present in the spirit to the spirit of His followers. There is another class of old legends, one of which was recently quoted by an eloquent bishop in this place, the legends of poor suffering creatures coming for relief, the beggar to St. Martin, the leper to St. Elizabeth, who were afterward—as is expressed in a beautiful poem some of us may know of, "*The Stranger and His Friend*"—believed to be the Saviour in disguise. These are the outward figures of the truth of which I am now speaking. The poor, the ignorant, the suffering among our fellow-men, the good, the holy and the just, in whatever condition of life, these are the monuments of the real presence of Christ on earth. This, also, is the meaning of the prayer in the Communion Service, which tells us that by partaking in the Eucharist with our fellow Christians we become partakers of the mystical body of Christ, which is the blessed company of all faithful people; and this is the meaning of the Apostle when he spoke of those who partook unworthily, because they did not discern the Lord's body. The Lord's body was, according to him, the body, as we have seen, of the Christian society. The bread or loaf, with its

many crumbs and particles, represented to him the one body of whom all were members. To discern the bond, the unity, the community, the solidarity of good men one with another, was to discern the body of Christ: to enter into their feelings, rights, privileges, hopes and fears was to partake and have a general fellowship in the one body. In the long ages which have passed in the world, both before Christ came and since He came, the question may well have been asked, "Lord, when saw we Thee?" We all know the answer; we know how it was that to those who never saw His outward face, even to those who had never heard His outward name, it would be said, "Ye gave me meat, ye gave me drink, ye took me in, ye visited me, ye came unto me." This, surely, is a true communion with Christ; this, surely, is a real presence of Christ upon earth.

There is yet one further sense in which we may speak of Christ's presence among us. He has passed, says the text, into the heavens; He sits, as the Creed says, at the right hand of God the Father; that is to say, He has passed beyond the limits of time and place to dwell in the presence of the Eternal. When we hold communion with Him, we hold communion with the most high God. When we speak of His presence with us, we speak of it in the same sense as we say that God is present with us; the whole universe is filled with the presence of God; and so in proportion as we believe in the Divine nature, in the Divine perfection of our Redeemer, in that proportion do we believe Him to be present everywhere, without respect of persons, without respect of places, without respect of times or seasons, without the intervention of any outward form or ordinance whatsoever. But, inasmuch as the Bible bears witness with our own hearts and consciences in telling us that there are particular moments when we are more specially conscious of the presence of God, so also it tells us there are special moments when we may be more specially conscious of the presence of Christ. The prophet Isaiah tells us that if the heaven is God's throne and the earth His footstool, yet He looks especially on the man that is poor and humble and of a contrite spirit; and St. Paul tells us that in any congregation of Christian worshipers where a direct appeal is made successfully to the secrets of the heart and of the conscience, that God is there among us of a truth, that there is a real presence of God. And so our Lord Himself has said that wherever two or three are gathered together in His name, that is to say, in devotion to all those high and holy purposes which His great name represents, there also is He in the midst of them. Therefore, whenever by thankful remembrance of His mercies, by sincere determination to do His will, by raising our thoughts above the cares and turmoils of earth



to a better and brighter world, we are brought near in spirit to Him, then and there He is specially present with us, wherever it is. And if we find this elevation of spirit, this thankful remembrance of the past, this earnest hope for the future, to be especially enkindled within us by the ordinances of the holy farewell supper which He left to His disciples, then at such moments there is the real presence in our hearts of Him who, as the Apostle says, is formed within us, "the hope of glory." In the holy ordinance, in the sacrament of life, in the joyous thanksgiving, in the pledge of past forgiveness and of future hope, many feelings of all kinds are mingled and will mingle always. There has been, perhaps there will be always, those who wish on such occasions to figure to themselves the presence of their Redeemer in a more local, material sense. It is vain to disturb them; such notions are for the most part the confusion of metaphor and logic, which it is hopeless to disentangle, and the result of efforts to express in words what belongs more properly to the imagination and the feelings. But whether we approve or whether we disapprove of such expressions, the main thing for us all to remember, and which we all can remember without any divergence of opinion, is that the highest, the most spiritual, the most real presence of Christ is that which the Bible has described to us—namely, in the heart, and not in the hands; in the spirit, and not in the flesh; in the service of others, and not in the saving of ourselves; in the heaven of heavens, and not in the forms, or words, or elements of earthly places or of earthly things. In proportion as the sacrament brings down our thoughts from heaven to earth, and fixes them on the earthly emblems of heavenly truth, in that proportion the presence of Christ is rendered faint and dim. In proportion as the sacrament lifts up our thoughts from earth to heaven, from the seen to the unseen, from the temporal to the eternal, from the human and the worldly, the ecclesiastical, to the Divine, the spiritual, and the universal, in that proportion the presence of Christ becomes real, living and quickening. Of this presence nothing on earth can deprive us, except our own sin or folly; and in the world to come it is the same presence which we shall behold in righteousness, and when we wake up after His likeness we shall be satisfied with it.

## **The Story of Enoch.**

### A SERMON

PREACHED BY THE Rev. J. W. Atkinson, IN THE LATIMER CONGREGATIONAL CHURCH, LONDON, ENGLAND.

*And Enoch walked with God : and he was not ; for God took him.*—Gen. v : 24.

WE are summoned to-night to gaze upon a bright particular star in the firmament of the Church—the world's morning star, and one which has proved to so many in all ages a guiding star of assurance and hope, pointing most unmistakably to a future of security and rest. At the same time, but little is known of Enoch, the notices of him to be found in the sacred volume being compressed into scantiest space. We could have wished, indeed, that the whole story of his life had been written for the world's instruction, as also the story of many another patriarch's life, so that the heroes of the world's grey dawn might have been remembered in something more than the letters that spelled out their names. This, however, in His providence, God has not permitted ; and we must await the fuller revelations of the future, in which that which was done in secret will be proclaimed upon the housetops. And although, in Enoch's case, only a few broken sentences are all that remain to perpetuate the tragic story of his life, for the book that bears his name is evidently apocryphal, yet sufficient is told us to reveal the true character of the *man*, and to cause him to stand out an illustrious example of devotion to all the after generations of mankind. Brethren, but few words are needed to describe the salient features of the majority of human lives. It is not needful to write a volume, after all, to tell whether a man has spent a noble or a wasted life. One stroke of the pen, one solitary word, may be enough. O for grace so to live that when we come to die, although for us there be no carven shrine in Fame's great temple, or wide space reserved in "storied page," our very name, like Enoch's, being fraught with a fragrant charm, may be the passport to the world's affection, and our unseen influence continue to distil upon the hearts of those that follow us, like unto the benediction that follows upon prayer !

I. Here is a life suddenly and prematurely cut short (at any rate, so far as this world is concerned) ; for, although Enoch lived for three hundred and sixty-five years, it was not half the usual age of the men of his day. God had reasons, no doubt, for the early translation of the patriarch. At the same time, in our ignorance, we are ready to exclaim, "Why not remove

the useless man, and leave Enoch still to bear his noble testimony?" Aye, the Church and the world have often said the same. Why should John the Baptist suffer execution while the voluptuous Tetrarch is permitted to wallow in his sin? Why is Stephen stoned in the zenith of his usefulness, while his guilty murderers are suffered to profane the earth by their withering presence? Why is the assassination of President Lincoln permitted at the time in which he is so much needed to the land in whose cause he died? Why must Livingstone gasp out his life in the lone and far-off land, whose very dust to him was dear, just as the dream of his life was about to be fulfilled? Why was Prince Albert summoned from the home and from the land where his godly example and Christian influence had proved so helpful in the past? Why is many a brave worker—many a pious father or mother—many a devoted missionary or pastor—many a Sunday-school teacher—smitten down by the hand of death in the moment when their saintly influence and teaching are needed most? Oh, brethren, we confess the enveloping mystery that hovers about the subject; and, but for the assurance that our brethren are not dead, but living still, and also that, though God buries His workman, He yet carries on His work, we should be almost ready at times to despair. Yes,

"We sadly watch the close of all,  
Life balanced on a breath—  
We saw upon their features fall  
The awful shade of death.  
All dark and desolate we were,  
And Nature murmuring cried—  
Ah, Lord! if Thou hadst but been here  
Our brethren had not died.

But when its glance the memory cast  
On all that Grace had done;  
And thought of life-long warfare past,  
And endless victory won;  
Then, Faith prevailing, wiped the tear,  
And, looking upward, cried,  
Ah, Lord! Thou surely hast been here,  
Our brethren have not died!"

Oh! thank God, all the workers of the glorious past are living still. We have buried their bodies in peace, like brave men a comrade-warrior who has fallen in the honorable field, but their souls live for evermore, and the work they began shall progress to the end. Oh! by the ashes of the sainted dead let us renew our fealty and our consecration to-day; and, as one after another they pass upward from our gaze, let us catch the mantle they fling to us, and, robing ourselves in the garments of the great departed, be it ours, like them, to do and die!

II. Enoch's was a life spent amid surrounding wickedness.

"God saw that the wickedness of man was great in the earth, and that every imagination of the thoughts of his heart was only evil continually." Yet God did not leave himself without a witness. Nor has he ever done since the world began. Abel and Enoch in the Patriarchal age; Elijah and Elisha in the aftertime, when the Jewish nation had cast off the authority Divine; Wycliffe and Huss, and Zwingle and Luther, the heralds of the corrupted Church's Reformation; and in more modern times still Wesley and Whitefield, the God-ordained agents of a second Reformation, whose mighty waves of blessing are to-day breaking on the shores of all the nations: all these have been raised to bear solemn witness to the Truth amid the world's abounding wickedness and gloom. God never has left Himself without a witness, and He never will! In nearly every home-circle there is some choice spirit; in every Church some noted for preëminent consecration; in every neighborhood a few who are a terror to evil-doers; in every nation one or more at the helm of affairs, who act in the light which lighteth every man that cometh into the world. It is for us to ask ourselves whether we, in our measure, are fulfilling our destiny as the lights of the world. Ours must not be a feverish gleam, nor a meteor of the marsh, nor a revolving lantern, emitting an occasional or periodical radiance, but a light calm, uniform, steady, shining alike through calm and storm. Its emblem, it has well been said, should be the light on the cliff. The startled waves rush over it, the storm smites it, and heavily against it rolls the broad shoulders of the hurricane; but steadfast, serene, immutable, the same, year after year, through all, the silent light burns on. "Let your light so shine before men that they may see your good works, and glorify your Father which is in heaven."

III. Enoch's was a life spent in fellowship with God. The Bible answers grandly the great cry of humanity: "Will God in every deed dwell with men on the earth? Behold the Tabernacle of God is with men, and He will dwell among them." "And Enoch walked with God." But how can two walk together unless they be agreed? God and Enoch were as one. He was not, like Adam, afraid of His presence and His voice; rather, like Samuel, could He say, "Speak, Lord, for Thy servant heareth." He had found in God a Friend, one that promised to stick closer than a brother; a Father providing for all the wants of His child; a Saviour redeeming his life from destruction; a Guide leading him through all the perilous pathways of life; a Rest amid all weariness; a Light in every hour of darkness; a Well in every Baca-valley of the heart's wilderness; a Support in affliction and trial, and his exceeding great reward. And Enoch walked with God. What a privilege to be sure! you say. It would be a great thing to

be able to say that we had walked arm-in-arm with Alexander, or Napoleon, or Wellington. It would be greater still if we could say that we had walked with angels; if they had come to sit with us as they did with Abraham; if they had come to visit us as they did Manoa; if they had come to wait upon us as they did upon the Saviour when they hovered over Bethlehem, or the garden in which He suffered, or the cross on which He hung, or the tomb in which He lay; or when they waited over the top of Olivet that they might greet Him home to heaven. O! it would have been a great thing when Jesus was upon the earth to have walked with Him, to have been with Him in the corn-fields, or by the well of Samaria, or as He stooped by yon city gate to give eyesight to the blind, or as He stood by the grave-side and cried, "Lazarus, come forth." And yet, beloved, an equal privilege is ours, for, like Enoch, we may in very deed walk with God and talk with Him even as a man talketh with his friend.

The foundation of this friendship is a common humanity, so to speak. I doubt whether a man and an angel could commune with so entire a union. Then how is it that God and man are able? Is not God great and holy and Divine, and man little and sinful and human? Yes, but at His very creation God made man after His own likeness, with a soul that could reflect His image; nay, made him a child to dwell in His house forever. And He has pursued His wandering offspring with a Father's yearning. When angels fell they were consigned to destruction; when man sinned it was the rebellion of a son, and not the treason of a subject. The Father condemned and punished, but He could not destroy. He loved His own image still, and, in order to reclaim the prodigal, God became man, and in the person of Jesus Christ lived a human life and died a sacrificial death, and rose again, and in glorified humanity ascended to heaven as the pledge of our ultimate redemption. Here, brethren, is the common humanity of which I spoke—the glorious fact that makes it possible for Enoch and every believing man through all the ages of time to walk with God.

Critics tell us that this expression, "walked with God," has a very peculiar force. There is in it the idea of strong persistence and determination. Nor do we wonder at finding this element in Enoch's character. He was indeed, to use an old phrase, a decided character. There is a story told of an old villager saying to David Livingstone, when but a youth, "Now, my lad, make religion the every-day business of your life, and not a thing of fits and starts; for if you do not, temptation and other things will get the mastery over you." The advice was almost a prophecy, so completely did Livingstone throughout his career fulfill the aged villager's ideal. Brethren,

so must it be with us. There are too many, alas! who go by fits and starts: who lack the grand, absorbing, all-conquering determination of Enoch, by which, amid a world of ungodly men, he was able to walk serenely with his God. Ye young men, especially, let this be the language of your heart to-day: "God helping me, I will be a Christian. Others may be profane, the oath shall never pass my lips; others may be fraudulent, the wrong shall never be done by me; others may waste their time, I will redeem it because it is precious; others may trifle away their energies, I am born for something higher. I am traveling to the holy land. Company I love on earth; but oh! the company of the redeemed, of the blood-washed, of angels and of God is higher than these companionships of earth. Earthly honors are well, but I aspire to a mansion and a throne, and a crown of life that fadeth not away." Yea, amid all seduction and blandishment, cry, "This one thing I do—I press to the mark for the prize of the high calling of God in Christ Jesus."

And then, assuredly, walking with God implies progress. No standing still in the Divine life. Enoch must have become, year by year, a holier man. He who consorts with a loftier spirit than his own grows like his companion. In such society his faculties are kept at their full tension. The powerful intellect of the superior commands his imitation. He adopts his sentiments, insensibly copies his diction and dress, and catches inspiration from his spirit. The more we know of God, the more Godlike do we become. We are changed into the same image. And just as that bold lad who climbed higher than any of his fellows up the crag in Virginia, found that his only safety was to climb to the very top, because he could not descend without a deadly fall, so we rejoice to know that every upward step in the Christian life makes another step needful; nor may we rest until we scale the very summit of the hill of the Lord, and rest in His presence forever. And Enoch walked, progressed, had larger visions of God, drank ever deeper draughts, scaled ever loftier heights, reveled in ever-abounding joys, and experienced the rapture of a hope that grew brighter with the lapse of time—a hope blooming with immortality and eternal life, and which defied the ravages of time and every possibility of decay. "And Enoch walked with God."

Note, also, that the writer of the Epistle to the Hebrews supplies us with the secret of Enoch's thrilling history. It was by faith that he was translated, by faith that he pleased God, and by faith that he enjoyed the inward testimony and assurance of his acceptance. What a mercy that the same faith and the same assurance may be ours to-day. Oh, for grace to realize the fact, and then to stir up this gift of God

within us. God cannot, and will not, accept us unless we are willing, unreservedly, to commit ourselves to His keeping. It is a dishonor to doubt Him, as so many of us do, after all His gracious dealings with us, and after all the bright promises that shine for our comfort in the firmament of Revelation. Without faith it is impossible to please God, or secure the assurance of His favor. With faith nothing is impossible to Him, and no joys too rapturous for Him to bestow.

“There are in this loud-stunning tide

Of human care and crime,

With whom the melodies abide

Of the everlasting chime.

Who carry music in their heart,

Through dusky lane and wrangling mart,

And ply their daily task with busier feet,

Because their hearts some holy strain repeat.”

Brethren, have we the decision and the faith of the Patriarch Enoch? Remember that he lived amid abounding wickedness, a solitary beacon-light amid the densest gloom. And moreover, he lived, so to speak, in the world's grey dawn, before the fuller revelation of Divinity had been vouchsafed. And yet he dared to trust and walk with God. And these are the men that are needed for the world's uplifting to-day: men of calm resolve, and steadfast faith, and heroic life. “Give me,” said John Wesley, “a hundred men who hate nothing but sin, fear nothing but God, and are determined to preach Christ and Him crucified, and I will turn the world upside down.” It was finely said, long ago, that what the nation wanted was not more Bibles, but a thousand Henry Thorntons, who should be living, speaking Bibles in themselves. For, after all, a true life is a divine poem that sets men to music rather than discussion. The world will argue forever with its Butlers and its Paleys, but it cannot reason against those whose lives commend themselves to every man's conscience in the sight of God. Oh for a race of men who, like Enoch, should become as the mystic pillar to the Israelites leading on the children of men through this wilderness world to the promised land of security and everlasting rest!

IV. Enoch's was a life of noble testimony. The Apostle Jude supplements this fragment of his history with the words, “And Enoch also, the seventh from Adam, prophesied saying, Behold, the Lord cometh with ten thousand of His saints.” Just as we elsewhere read, “He shall come to be glorified in His saints, and to be admired in all them that believe.” Enoch proclaimed, moreover, that He should come “to execute judgment upon all, and to convince all that are ungodly among them of all their ungodly deeds which they have ungodly committed, and of all their hard speeches which ungodly

sinner have spoken against Him." Here, my brethren, was a fearless testimony, and one which the world needs to-day as much as it did in the time of Enoch. How few men really believe in the judgment to come! I mean in such manner as practically to influence their every-day life. A judgment in which memory must, like an opened grave, give forth the ghastly monsters that have been slumbering so long! He was a brave and fearless man to speak the truth for the people's good like this. And no wonder if he so incurred their hot displeasure that to protect him from their vengeance God deemed it best to let down his chariot one day, telling Enoch to step in at once, and then, in an instant, conveying him, amid angel ministers, up, up above the stars to his eternal home. "And he was not, for God took him."

V. Enoch's was a life crowned by translation. "He was not, for God took him." Why, we are not told. Probably his life was threatened by the angry and ungodly sinners against whose doings he declaimed, and to protect him from their rage God may have let down His chariot from the sky and said, "Now, Enoch, step into it at once," so that when his would-be persecutors came to lay hands on him, lo! he was not, for God had taken him. Favored and honored man—not only in his departure, but in his life! Why, in that age of longevity, when men's lives extended over eight centuries, no doubt little Enoch, when a boy, had conversed with the first man—the then aged Adam. And oh, how he would, with childlike wonder, drink in the story of the original Eden from Adam's lips—its fragrant beauty, its perfect happiness, its bounding life. With what strange feelings, also, he would listen to the sad story of the fall, and to Adam's sorrow, and his turning away from Eden, and the cherubim that guarded the gate that man might never enter more. But specially would he listen as the first Adam spake to his young disciple of a *second* Adam, and of the promise which told how the seed of a woman should bruise the serpent's head. Favored man, both in his life and departure!

God may have translated Enoch for another reason. In an age when men lived for hundreds of years, and the opening of a grave was an unusual occurrence, heaven, or another state, might soon be forgotten. Even in our own day, in which the earth sounds hollow to our foot-tread, it is so full of graves, it is often difficult to impress men with the thought of their mortality and their future. When the fathers, therefore, of the ancient world missed Enoch from their companionship, and when the ungodly no longer gazed upon that beauteous life because God had translated His servant, they would naturally begin to reflect and inquire, and they would

feel that there was another state, above and beyond the present, into which all earth's departed ones had passed. True, not much light appears to have been shed upon this subject in the Old Testament dispensation. They had glimmerings and intimations; but their religious knowledge and privilege, as compared with ours, was only as the first streaks of morning compared with the splendor of noonday. Standing where we do, we have the lessons Enoch had—the lessons Moses had. We have listened to the thoughts that made David tune his harp; have had visions that fired the imagination of Ezekiel and Daniel; have had the teaching of Jesus when on earth; and oh! the angelic songs that have reached and filled our world with heavenly music! And amid the comparative uncertainty of the ancient dispensation; amid the blind gropings of human reason, and the uncertain flights of imagination, even at its best estate, with what joy do we read that Christ hath brought life and immortality to light by the Gospel, and, with the Apostle Peter, how triumphant we can exclaim, "Blessed be the God and Father of our Lord Jesus Christ, who, of His abundant mercy, hath begotten us to a lively hope to an inheritance that is incorruptible and undefiled, and that fadeth not away!"

In Enoch's translation is an intimation of the recompense of the reward. God hath declared, "Them that honor Me, I will honor." Enoch had his reward even on earth, for he had this testimony that he pleased God. And so, sooner or later, in life or in death, will every true child of God. "Yea, the Spirit itself beareth witness with our spirits that we are the children of God." And to crown all, his reward is consummated in the presence of his King. Brethren, be ye faithful unto death, and ye also shall wear the crown that Enoch wears. We don't say, "Be good merely to secure heaven"; no, but be good for the sake of goodness, and because it is right; but we do say for your encouragement, that to them who, by patient continuance in well-doing seek for glory and immortality, Christ will give eternal life.

What a rapturous change for Enoch, from earth to heaven—from earth with its sins and its sorrows, to heaven with its purity and gladness! Who can imagine the feelings of the Patriarch the first moment in which he suddenly finds himself surrounded by the angel choristers and the streaming glory. And yet, when Enoch entered heaven, no Saviour had gone down to redeem the world, and the noble army of prophets and apostles and martyrs were unknown. There were a few souls already there to greet him—Abel, Adam, and a few others—but these were enough to begin the new song. And we can imagine the angels gathering about this little band, and asking each other the meaning of the anthem, in which

they themselves were unable to join—"Unto Him that hath loved us!" Ah! brethren, but as one writer, whose words I quote, has justly said, Heaven will be very different now from what Enoch found it. Oh, to be translated now when the redeeming work is finished! When He that went forth traveling in the greatness of His strength has returned from Edom and from Bozrah with His garments dyed with the blood of his enemies, and His brow graced with the many crowns of His achievements! Enoch found heaven a field of expectation—we shall find it a scene of triumph. Enoch conversed with Christ on the deace He should accomplish. We shall congratulate Him on what He *has* accomplished. Enoch found but a few companions to enter with him into the immediate vision of Divine glory. We shall greet numbers without number, of every kindred, with Jesus at their head; a sight this which Enoch did not see for ages after his translation. Heaven was worth *living* for in Enoch's time. It is worth *dying* for now! And, although for us there be no translation like that of the glorious Patriarch—although for us there must be the journey through the shrouded valley, and across the dark, chill waters, yet, beloved, fear not to die, if by dying you may enter into immortal life. Nay, in prospect of such a life, we might almost, with Paul, long to depart and to be with Christ. For, although the last enemy may come with a rough accent and in harsh costume, he can but administer one message, "Child of God, I am sent by thy Parent to summon thee to His home." It may be but the sigh, or the agony and convulsion of a moment, and then all will be over—and the child of God has escaped from the family on earth to the family in heaven, to await the glorious manifestation of the sons of God, when the ransomed of the Lord shall return unto Zion with songs and everlasting joy upon their heads.

**The Lessons of the Life of St. Paul.****A BACCALAUREATE SERMON**

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*For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all, that I  
might gain the more.*—I Cor. ix: 19.

ON these Baccalaureate occasions I have loved to speak to you of our Lord Jesus Christ—to tell you of the glory of His person and the worth of His work. Nor do I come to you to-night with any other theme; for my text leads me to speak to you of an educated man's work in the world, when Christ had taken possession of his heart.

Paul was indeed an educated man of no ordinary kind; for he was one of the three great master minds who, in the realm of thought, have ruled the world. These three are Aristotle, Paul and Francis Bacon. Nor do I hesitate to place Paul as the chief of these three greatest spirits of all time, whether regard be had to the lofty themes he taught or to the tenacity with which these themes have kept their hold on the minds of men, or to the native powers of this great teacher.

Paul was born at Tarsus, the capital of Cilicia, in Lesser-Asia, one of the most renowned seats of Grecian learning, and which Strabo placed above Athens and Alexandria in philosophical and literary culture. Here, from his earliest years, he had every facility for gaining that knowledge of the Greek language and literature which is shown everywhere in his speeches and epistles. It is clear, also, from internal evidence that Paul did not first write these letters in Hebrew and then translate them into Greek; but he taught in Greek, and spoke Greek rapidly and with a precision and accuracy of thought and language which we would have a right to expect from an educated Grecian. All this is clear from his speeches, recorded in the Book of Acts, and from his fourteen Epistles. His quotations also from Aratus, Cleanthes, Menander and Epimenides show the range of his reading and attainments.

The "Phenomena" of Aratus, quoted by Paul, Acts xvii: 28, though highly praised by Ovidius, was probably out of the range of reading of even Grecians; but when it is remembered that Aratus, like Paul, was a Cilician, we gain an additional fact, leading to the conclusion that Paul's early training was Grecian, and took in all the books which the learned at Tarsus read and talked about. Here, too, he learned the trade of a tent-maker, by which handicraft he nobly supported himself when he became.

an apostle, so that he might not be burdensome to the churches. But Paul, though born at Tarsus, himself tells us that he was "brought up" at Jerusalem. When a boy, then, he must have been taken thither to be taught "according to the perfect" manner of the law of the fathers. Somewhere then between the age of ten and fifteen, and most probably, as Neander thinks, about the age of thirteen, already speaking Greek fluently, familiar with Greek authors, and with the Septuagint, the Greek version of the Old Testament, and having learned a trade, he sat at the feet of Gamaliel, whom the Talmud calls "the glory of the Law," and who besides was the first Jewish teacher to whom title of "Rabban," our Master, was given. And if any one is disposed to dispute Paul's claims to such attainments at the age of thirteen, on the ground of its impossibility, I will add that examples of equal attainments are to be found in the History of Literature.

But Paul, as one of the master-minds of the world of thought, had other gifts, native and acquired, which are far more wonderful and rare than all these linguistic attainments. He was gifted beyond most men. With a quickness of perception, by which he saw at once the precise point of every question, and a promptness of thought which afforded at once, ready for use, whatever that question needed, either to answer objections, solve difficulties, or reach the desired conclusion, he had, too, a depth, breadth, quickness, force and prompt elaborateness of thought, arising from his habitual thoughtfulness, which form an intellectual combination most rare indeed. With such native gifts, under the teaching of Gamaliel, he mastered the whole Rabbinical system. This system included jurisprudence, theology, and interpretation of the Old Testament under the four modes common among learned Jews, namely—Allegory, Typology, Tradition and Accommodation.

He would seem at first to have despised Christianity as unworthy of his notice. And influenced, perhaps, by the mildness of Gamaliel, his fury against Christianity seems for a time not to have been excited. But when, by and by, he saw the inroads which Christianity was making on Judaism, the disciple, intellectually greater than his great Master, restrained no longer, burst out into fury as the persecutor of a religion the claims of which he despised as unworthy of examination. But now, miraculously convinced that Christ was the Messiah of the Law and the Prophets, his whole nature and character underwent an immediate and an entire change. As before, all he was was turned against Christ and Christians, now all he is is laid on the altar of Christ, and the followers of the Redeemer are henceforth his beloved and fondly cherished brethren. No one can tell what passed through Paul's

mind during these three days, when, in Damascus, he was without sight, and neither did eat nor drink. But what followed and what he became by the power of the Holy Ghost was in harmony with all his mental powers and habits. Hence he, who took in all subjects of thought in all their depth and breadth, and formed connections which remained steadfast, now became a Christian of such firm convictions that no words so well as his own can describe himself. He was steadfast, immovable, always abounding in the work of the Lord, for he knew it was not in vain in the Lord.

And now, in speaking further of his Christian course, I must confine myself to the points which the text suggests.

1. *Paul's expediency.* This is clearly taught us in the text and context. Paul became the servant of all, that he might gain the more unto their own highest good; and when that was gained Paul's happiness was complete. But how different was this from the expediency which men usually practice! This word has been the cloak under which selfishness, deceit, hypocrisy and cruelty of every form and degree have sought to conceal their odiousness, and to practice more fully and safely their accursed arts. But Paul's was as diverse from this as the light of midday is from the most intense darkness of the blackest night earth ever saw. Paul's expediency caused him to become all things to all men in the way of sacrifice, deprivation, suffering and endurance of toil, that he might bring all to the knowledge of Christ, and have that done for all others which had been done for him. Not indeed that any one could claim of Paul such devotion. The Apostle in the text disclaims such right on the part of any. He says: "For though I be free from all men, yet have I made myself servant unto all." That is, though I am bound by no claims, am obliged, neither as an Apostle nor a man, to do or suffer for men what I am now enduring, yet I make myself a slave to all to gain their good. His purpose was to subject himself to any loss or suffering for the spiritual welfare of men; and hence his expediency led him to work at his trade, lest he might be burdensome to the churches, and so turn away any from the Gospel.

2. *His patriotism.* His love for his own nation and his intense desire for its good. Patriotism is a term which has been as much misused as expediency. Indeed, it has been so basely employed that, when one talks much and loudly of his love of country, all fear that the self-proclaimed patriot has designs upon his country's honor and welfare. These men would make no sacrifices in the dark hour of the nation's adversity. They would prey upon it in prosperity, forsake it in adversity, and become its enemies under the least sense of

injustice and oppression. There are grounds to question the story of Coriolanus in Roman History. But it is truthlike, if it be not true. For under a sense of wrong, wholly imaginary, men have made common cause with the enemies of the country which gave them birth.

But such was not Paul's love of country and kin. None suffered from his countrymen more than he did when he became a Christian. They hated him with a most intense abhorrence, regarding him as a traitor to God and his land. At their hands he suffered stripes, imprisonment, and sufferings of many forms. Jews in Palestine and Jews in foreign lands made common cause in hounding Paul around the earth as a pestilent fellow, who did not deserve to live. But the Apostle loved his people not the less but the more for all their hatred. He was willing to give up all that earth could give, and life itself, if thereby salvation might come to Israel.

3. *Paul's charity.* By which I mean his love for mankind, and his purpose, prosecuted with unwearied zeal, to spend and be spent in order that he might win to Christ as many as he could. To be a Christian was everything with Paul. It included every duty and every privilege. It put a man in the way of becoming all he ought to be or was capable of becoming as to character and of enjoying as a rational immortal being. There was room then in such purpose for an intense love of others to exist, and also for its fullest exercise. It was the highest form of Godliness—*Godlikeness*—which human nature, redeemed and renewed, could feel and exhibit. And Paul was given to earth as an exemplification of what Christianity could do for fallen nature—to show us beyond all possibility of gain-saying, that, in a worldly, ambitious man like Paul, there could be wrought such a likeness to Christ, such a subserviency to His will, such an unselfish, pure devotion to doing good for Christ's sake, that with the master the servant could say, "the zeal of thine house hath eaten me up."

In what I have said to you about Paul I have been speaking of Christianity; for Paul was what Christ by the Gospel had made him, and from the day of his new birth he was one with Christ. And Christ and Christianity are so one that they can never be sundered. Is Christianity here? Then Christ is here. Is Christ here? Then Christianity is here. And hence, in harmony with the teaching of Bishop Butler in his "Analogy of Religion," I hold, that, while objections to arguments in defense of religion are valid, and objections to interpretations of Scripture are valid, for these are the arguments and interpretations of men; yet objections to Christianity are frivolous, because it is of God, it is divine.

And do you ask on what grounds is Christianity affirmed to

be of God? I answer—1. Because of the truths it teaches.  
2. Because of the other additional proofs it gives.

1. And first as to the teachings of Christianity. It reaffirms the three great truths of Natural Religion in their original purity, cleansed from the pollutions with which Heathenism and Sensuality had defiled them. These truths are: 1. There is a God, the Creator and Upholder of the World. 2. God is the moral governor of men, and the law of His Government is Virtue, requiring us always and everywhere to be just, good and true. 3. In the future state after death God will render to men exact retributive justice according to their works done in this life.

Now, these three truths of Christianity are, first, the republication of the teaching of Natural Religion, which all men in all ages have received and held, though many corruptions have been added, which have blunted their force. But when Natural Religion has no more to say, Christianity goes on to declare: 4. That God has pardon for sinners and has not cast off His paternal heart, though men have lost the filial spirit. Here then is a blessed addition, to which also the silence of Natural Religion is no contradiction. Nay, the universal human heart needs and seeks after some door of hope outside of itself, leading it out from the prison of despair. So then this revelation of pardon has nothing anywhere to contradict it, but a cry from the universal heart of the race is a declaration from man's soul, that God in being ready to pardon is a true father and has not cast off His disobedient children.

2. And now, when Christianity has thus laid down its four fundamental truths, of which three have the universal assent of men, and the fourth as in answer to the universal cry of the human soul, it comes forth and gives its two proofs of the truth of all its teachings—namely two facts, Christ and the Christian.

And as to Christ, Christianity asks, How can the life and death of Christ be accounted for on any other supposition than that He was truly God and truly man, as Scripture asserts and Christ Himself claims? Here let pass in review before your mind Christ's spotless purity; His unselfishness; His forgiveness; His unwearied doing of good; His wonderful teaching, making new relations of our relations to God and the good angels, to Satan and fallen spirits, to our fallen men, kindred, neighbors, strangers, enemies; Christ's insight into men's hearts: knowledge of their secret thoughts; His answering of men's questions in a way far above all the moralities of life hitherto known or dreamt of, and yet all these an-

swers having at once to the universal conscience the aroma of a better land, the programme of heaven. Furthermore, that wonderful One, so pure, gentle, unselfish, kind, truthful, talks about heaven and the unseen world, of what they do there and how they feel, whence He Himself came, whither He was going, first by the cross, and then to the crown conveyed by attending angels. He is the meekest, gentlest being who ever trod the earth. Moses was a very meek man, but his meekness sometimes forsook him and he fell shamefully, aspiring to speak and act for God. But Christ's meekness never forgets itself. *He was meekness*, not clothed in it; and yet without any reserve and in plain, unmistakable language He claims ever for Himself a Divine relation to the heavenly Father, which must be true—for to sustain its truth He raised the dead, cleansed the leper, gave sight to the blind, and Himself came forth from Joseph's tomb alive again after He had been crucified and slain. Now, explain this on any other ground than that of the Divine, human Saviour, or except Christ and Christianity with Paul, the master mind of the world, and feel with the Christian that the fittest place for the highest intelligence, human or angelic, is at the feet of Jesus Christ, the Eternal Word, that light of earth who lighteth every man that cometh into the world.

And as to the Christian, the second fact of Christianity, it is asked, How on any other supposition than that of a Divine work brought upon his heart can the life of St. Paul be accounted for? Men speak much of the perversion of Christianity and the subsequent little good it has done in the world. But, with Bishop Butler, I affirm that no one but an atheist, who desires Natural Religion, has a right to make such an objection. For, if the perversion of Christianity could prove it false, then Natural Religion would be proved false also, since it has been perverted. But had the perversion of Christianity been ten thousand times worse than it has been, this could not prove the thing perverted to be bad, but rather the very opposite. But, on the other hand, one St. Paul, one consistent Christian, were there not another in the nineteen centuries, would give us the fact which unanswerably proves Christianity to be from God. Lord George Lyttleton, in 1747, published a book entitled "Observations on the Conversion and Apostleship of St. Paul." Of this book Dr. Samuel Johnson remarked that it was "a treatise on which infidelity had never been able to fabricate a specious answer." No, indeed. Infidelity cannot gainsay the testimony of that life. The life of Paul is a fact, and as such it is not of the earth, earthy; it neither breathes its spirit nor does its deeds. It is love, forgiveness, purity, self-sacrifice, and all out of gratitude to Christ,

who had done so much for Paul. And on the Apostle's soul this gratitude to Christ was a perennial fountain, whence ever flowed those streams which have brought everlasting life to millions and shall bring it for millions of millions more.

